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Michael Petersham —

See page 62.

"I—I—CANNOT TELL YOU THAT. I MUST NOT—I CANNOT," SHE GASPED.

THE
NEUTRALS' PORTION

A ROMANCE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I—I cannot tell you that I must not—I cannot," she gasped.................... FRONTISPIECE

She looked up into his face and smiled through her tears. 10

As the judge pronounced the sentence, Paul clenched his fists until the knuckles showed white. 180

"Look, Paul," she said. "It is a good omen. 262

★ PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY.

The great King of Kings
Hath in the table of his law commanded
That thou shalt do no murder: and wilt thou, then,
Spurn at his edict and fulfill a man's?

SHAKESPEARE.

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The Neutrals' Portion

CHAPTER I

THE LITTLE YELLOW SCHOOLHOUSE

PAUL NEHRING had slept late that fateful morning. His trip from Heidelburg—where he had been living three years as a student at the great university—across Germany and France to London had been long and wearisome. Railroad traffic was utterly demoralized in France; trains arrived and departed according to no known schedules, delays were interminable and exasperating and even when finally started they were frequently held for hours on desolate sidings while the rails were kept clear for military uses. Things had been better in Germany but even there, schedules had been shattered, and delays, where the only explanation was " service of the army " had been not infrequent. Added to these discomforts had been the examinations and questionings at the frontiers and en route, the issuing of passports accomplished only after a grilling cross examination and it was indeed a thoroughly tired Paul who reached London.

He wanted nothing but to shake the dust of Europe from his feet and see his native land once more. He was soul sick of war and rumors of war. The very atmosphere of these countries was frantic, mad, pulsing with murderous passions and killing hate. It was stifling. Paul yearned for the clean, sane air of his native Indiana, the sight of his great farms, the cheery speech of his native land racy with humorous slang, the quiet, solid, restful sanity of mind that settled differences by other means than the sword and looked with abhorrence on all killing, no matter under what patriotic guise it went. Of murder and the means and tools of murder he had enough. He wanted to get out of this atmosphere of swords and shells and powder, back to that of the ploughshare and the results of the peaceful industry of a peace loving people.

Great as was his longing, however, it seemed momentarily impossible of satisfaction. Like many Americans long resident in Germany, he had sensed the slow grim hardening of the people's determination to resist the impending onslaught. The war clouds hung heavy and low; the menace of the Slav was on every lip. Paul realized and understood what was about to happen. His father was German and his mother French and Paul, American born, was American to the core. Only a few mornings before, after glancing over his paper, he had suddenly made up his mind.

"This is none of my scrap!" he exclaimed. "I'm neutral and I'm going to get out of this!"

And so he had packed up and started for London. Arduous as had been the journey, his three days in London were even more nerve racking. The steamship offices were thronged with hysterical women and haggard men begging and pleading for accomodations. There was none to be had immediately and no one knew what the future held in store. London was phlegmatic as usual but it was the calm of tension. The spy fever had already innoculated the crowds. No one knew whether England was going in or not, but meantime, mysterious and indefinable barriers had arisen and on the stranger within her gates England had fixed a wary eye. Difficult as it was to get into the country, it seemed infinitely more difficult to get out.

After three days of vain chasing, Paul gave up his quest so far as London was concerned and went to Southampton, trusting that somehow or other, he might get on a homeward bound ship there. His dinner had been good, he felt at peace with the world and hopeful of the morrow, and as he strolled along the busy streets, a regimental band wheeled sharply into the square. A sudden hush fell on the crowd. Then the leader brought his sword to " present " and slowly and solemnly, as every man stood bareheaded, the strains of " God Save The King " swelled over the crowd. Paul also stood, his head bared, but the music he heard was the sound of fresh young voices in the little yellow schoolhouse on the hill back in Indiana ringing out in shrill treble " My Country 'Tis of Thee! "

Tall, well over six feet in fact, his blond hair and blue eyes vouching for the strain of German, the delicate lipped, mobile mouth with its unexpected capacity for unmovable decision and unswerving firmness betraying the French, in all his ways, his thoughts and feelings were unmistakably American. His years abroad had left an imprint of tolerance of mind for customs, habits and foibles foreign to his soil, but beyond that perfecting of a racial gift his experience had little affected him. His life had been typical of his day and kind, save for the sojurn in Europe.

Born on his father's farm in Southern Indiana, he had been the only child of his parents and had been brought up by them with every tender care that wealth and affection could suggest. In his father and mother, German tenacity and industrial enterprise with French thrift had steadily added to their original land holdings until they owned a series of great farms, one of which they cultivated themselves and rented the others. Throughout his childhood and youth, Paul was surrounded with comforts. His father hoped that the boy would continue the accumulation of land as he had done, but it was evident from Paul's early years that he was not temperamentally adaped to the life of a gentleman farmer. He loved to roam in the forests that clad the low lying hills around which his father's holdings centered; he loved to lie gazing into the procession of clouds reflected in the little brooks that watered the fertile acres. But beyond this he showed little interest in the things a farm-bent boy might be expected to take interest in. The boy was not lazy, far from it, nor did he lack the faculty of learning, but although he performed the chores set for him faithfully and promptly, it was obvious that his work was mechanical, uninspired by either hope or initiative. Nor was this lack of interest inspired by discontent with farm life or by the hectic desire of youth for change, excitement, novelty and purchasable gaiety. He liked the simple rural life and the simple rural pleasures.

He was simply a thoroughly normal boy who could take no interest in the business of farming. He could always lead the boys of the neighborhood to the best swimming holes and none could swim so far or dive so deep. He knew just where to troll the line for croppy and just where the catfish had his watery lair. Every crow's nest in the woods he was familiar with and could lure the squirrel from his hole by chattering like his mate. The haunts and habits of the denizens of wood and field he knew well and before he was fifteen years of age he had sought to tame and domesticate specimens of nearly all. Care free, rejoicing in the life of woods and fields and streams, without the responsibilities that so often serve to early make grave and subdued the average farm lad, Paul found life sweet and pleasant.

There came an end to this, all too soon for farm loving Paul. Resolved that his son should be well grounded for the training in any profession he might later chose, Paul's father had a serious talk with the lad one day, the result of which was that a few days later Paul found himself bound for Chicago there to be enrolled first for the final year in a well known preparatory school and subsequently in that great educational institution whose massy buildings adorn the banks of Lake Michigan.

This was not altogether to Paul's liking. He was abruptly separated from his agreeable surroundings—his cherised objects and hopes—and faced the problem of living and making friends in the large, strange, bustling city. The transition was too sudden, too startling, despite the adventure and novelty of it, to arouse in him anything but mild resentment and trepidation.

Then there were other reasons, in fact, at least one other element made his going away very sad —sad to another as well as to him. It was a friendship that grew with the years; and during the last two years of their school days, spent in the little yellow schoolhouse—yellow and trimmed in white, and whose successive coats were always of the same color—his desk was immediately back of Gladys Wentworth's. There were many more boys than girls at Hazelwood—for that was the name of the school—and as the desks and seats on one side of the little room, traditionally used by the boys, were insufficient to accommodate all of the attending youths, some few, including Paul, were transferred to the opposite side occupied by the girl pupils.

Perhaps this honor—if such it might be called, judged by the school-boy standards at Hazelwood at that time—fell to Paul because he was more mischievous than some of the other boys, and because the change to the gentler side might have an ameliorating effect. Perhaps it was due to the fact that he was first to suggest to the teacher his willingness to forego his traditional rights on the " boys' side," and accept the jeers of his fellow pupils, charging him with lacking those sterner qualities that a boy should possess; thus becoming a martyr of femininity.

Paul has long since learned, as a student of legal science, the practical value of that trite saying "possession is nine points of the law." But he knew it by instinct before he discovered it from books; and singular as it may be, she seemed to be prompted by the same motives, for, at the beginning of school the next year, both were present early in the morning on the first day of the term, to establish their possessive rights by virtue of occupation, of the same seats and desks, respectively, as of the previous term.

And so, eventually, it became not a punishable offense, if during the school hours he should assist her with the difficult problems in arithmetic, or if she should demonstrate to him the proper diagram and analysis of a complex sentence.

Their hearts were saddened that Paul should be virtually kidnapped and carried away to the city. The day he was to leave, he went to her to say farewell. He held her little hand in his during the whole of their brief conversation, and her eyes filled with tears.

"I wish you wouldn't go, and I know that without your help I shall fail in my arithmetic," she said.

His eyes grew moist as he replied.

"I am very sorry that I must leave, but perhaps some other fellow—maybe Sammy Clark—can sit back of you and help you solve the hard problems." He looked into her face inquiringly. That Sammy was willing to try, he was quite confident; and he had arrived at that conclusion not altogether by intuition, either.

But she understood the question in his heart as well as in his mind, and she replied:

"No, I'll do the best I can, and the problems that are too difficult—I'll just let them go."

Silently he gave hearty assent.

The incident of their parting was momentous to them. She was on her way home from school when he met her to say good-bye. She saw him coming and waited at the little foot-bridge by the maples.

As he saw her then he believed her to be the most beautiful lass he had ever met, and the most angelic creature in all the world. Perhaps his conclusions were largely drawn from the fact that he did not fully understand girls—he had no sisters to learn from by association and experience and analysis. Perhaps it was because she had been the "apple of his eye" for so long, that he did not even take the time or the trouble to study and compare those other lassies with whom he came in contact, in order to ascertain their angelic qualities.

She stood on the foot-bridge over the gently gurgling waters of the little brook, silent in figure, her books under her arm, her sun-bonnet thrown back revealing regular, clear-cut features, and long, wavy, brown locks hanging down loosely. Her large brown eyes filled with tears.

Standing there with the beautiful tinted maple-leaves softly falling and with her hand in his, she looked up into his face and smiled through her tears—like the sunshine breaking out, gently, from an April shower.

SHE LOOKED UP INTO HIS FACE AND SMILED THROUGH HER TEARS.

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CHAPTER II

A HERITAGE

PAUL soon became interested in his new life and learned to adapt himself to strange surroudings. At first he was quite discontented and homesick; he missed his mother's tender sympathy, her unfailing understanding and constant encouragement. Then, too, his thoughts often turned to the little yellow schoolhouse, with all the tender memories it brought with it and the youthful tragedy of the parting on the little foot-bridge.

During his first few weeks in Chicago, he received a letter from his little girl friend every few days; but as the weeks stretched into months, her missives came with less frequency. She had written him that she was very busy with her school work, it is true, and also with supervising the housework, owing to her mother's failing health. He might have accepted such excuses as good had she not written one last letter whose inner meaning he read between the lines.

She told him her standing in arithmetic was " very good "—that she had no difficulty with the subject whatever, and was getting along "surprisingly well."

Now Paul knew that mathematics was her weak point and that she had depended on him almost entirely: and he could understand now how her arithmetic could be good only upon one hypothesis. The green eyed monster pictured to him the scene; a very willing youth bending over a very little girl—his warm breath fanning her cheek as he pointed out to her, over her shoulder, the significant mathematical errors; she turns to thank him, looking him in the eyes—so close.

It was many days before he replied. But meanwhile she wrote again telling him that her parents had at last yielded to the wishes of her grandmother, and that they would in a few days, remove to "New York" to make their home with her aged relative. She also told him that a very good academy existed in the village near her new home and that she would be enrolled in it. She was truly sorry, she wrote, that they would leave before he came home on his vacation, and that she would consequently not be able to see him before their departure.

That was the last letter he received from Gladys Wentworth. He wrote her afterward several times, but received no reply; and he concluded that she had either not received his letters or her new surroundings had made her forget him entirely and those happy days at the little school, and the long ramblings in the woods among the flowers and the birds.

As he sat on the bank of the brook, during his following vacation, casting his line for the fish that seemed to spurn his bait, he wondered if the academy in the village had many pupils and if she had mathematics in her curriculum.

Paul continued his studies in Chicago, entered college, completed the regular four years' course, and then spent two additional years in special post graduate study. Each summer he went home for his vacation. After six years of college work, he came home to rest for a year or so before entering upon his chosen career, the law. He busied himself about the farm and seemed to enjoy the work—a surprise to his father, for he had given up all hopes that Paul would ever be interested in agricultural matters.

Finally he went West and entered upon the study of what he had determined would be his life's work. He found the law exceedingly interesting, and spared no effort to perfect himself in the practise.

Shortly before his admission to the bar, Paul received a telegram stating that both his parents had been seriously injured in a railroad accident. He hastened home. His mother had already passed away, and his father's condition was precarious. With heavy heart he hastened to the bedside of his beloved parent. As he knelt by his father's side, the latter took Paul's hand in his.

"My son," he said, "my course is about over, mother is calling, I shall not be long. I am glad you came, in time. I was afraid you couldn't, and now—I shall be easier. Paul, my boy," he continued with considerable effort, "you never knew how devoted mother and I were to you; and how we suffered at having you away so much. But we were willing to sacrifice ourselves for your good. We aimed to develop you, in mind and in heart, so that you would be true and just to yourself and a useful member of society. This, after all, is the greatest heritage we could leave you. I know you will not disappoint us." He paused a moment to collect his strength then he continued.

"The lands and other property we leave, cost us much effort and labor. I hope you will use these things wisely, not selfishly. Remember, Paul, riches may be a blessing or a curse, dependent on how you use them. I am leaving you more than you can reasonably use. Remember, the world is large, there are many ways in which you can help mankind. I had a plan of that kind—it is cut short now. The cause of humanity—do something for it, Paul, do——"

His words were labored, and his sentences disconnected. After resting again he went on:

" Some day, Paul, you will go across the sea and find your mother's people and mine; they'll be glad to see you. Maybe they need you, Paul, maybe——"

He fell back, unable to speak more.

In the early dawn as the birds were gently piping their first notes among the trees that skirted the lawn, Paul's father, eagerly following those beckoning hands, crossed the silent river to the Great Beyond.

CHAPTER III

HIS GREAT BURDEN

THE funeral was dreary and dismal since Paul had no relatives whose presence might have served if not to alleviate his grief at least to distract his mind from constant brooding on his loss and loneliness. Neighbors came and offered their sympathy. As neighbors they could not have done more. But it was a time when Paul craved closer sympathy—a time when blood and kinship count for much.

Everything had suffered a change. The flowers and the trees were there, the birds, the brooks, but a dark cloud had obscured and dimmed his vision. Everywhere as he moved about the farm, he longed to hear once more, the deep mellow voice of his father; and at night as he sat before the fire-place in the cozy sitting-room, he seemed to seek, once again, the smiling face of that dear old mother in its setting of silvery locks, and those kindly eyes beaming at him over gold-rimmed spectacles—set low—as they were wont to be.

Paul's mind in its loneliness and isolation, reverted to the love of his youth, Gladys. But he found little comfort in his memories; he had grown to manhood, and he could remember her only as a very little girl, with wavy hair and smiling childish face.

Some days after the funeral, Paul was strolling over the fields for recreation and to divert his mind from his sorrows. He wandered on aimlessly, finally finding himself near the little old schoolhouse, the center about which revolved many events of his boyhood days. But he found that the color had been changed. It was no longer yellow but a sort of drab. The door was unlocked and he walked in. The floor was new and the walls redecorated. He looked for Glady's desk and his, just back of it, but they too were gone. The old furniture had been replaced by that of the latest types and patterns. Time had not changed him alone.

He wandered down to the little foot-bridge by the maples. There was a landmark that did not seem to be changed; for the bridge was just as rustic as of old, and the waters of the little brook were still gurgling and singing over the stones, and the tinted maple-leaves were falling, softly —for it was again October.

He leaned upon the railing of the bridge and gazed into the stream. Suddenly a leaf from the old maple tree came across his line of vision and he watched it fall, gently, into the water. Immediately it was caught up by the stream and whirled hither and thither among the stones then spun 'round and 'round in playful eddy until it finally drifted out with the current into a broad stretch of placid waters, and floated gently and peacefully on its course.

It seemed to him that the story of the leaf was symbolic of life! And he wondered if beyond the rocks and shoals and eddying of his own experiences, there were for him, "havens of quiet waters."

As he stood plunged in reverie, from the mists of the past emerged familiar shapes and forms, and he lived over again his boyhood days. He could see as if it were but yesterday, the wavy haired lass with her sun-bonnet thrown back, her little hand in his, looking up to him with those brown eyes filled with tears, as she said, "I wish you wouldn't go, and I know without your help I shall fail in my arithmetic."

Paul was startled from his meditations by a hand placed gently upon his arm, and a voice said——

"Come, the sun is going down. Sarah and I have been waiting for you this long time."

It was old Silas, his father's foreman who, together with his good wife Sarah, had lived upon the farm for many years.

During the days that followed, Paul thought many times of his father's dying request that sometime he should go to Europe and visit his relatives. The more he pondered over the matter, the more he became convinced that he should do so at once. The change in scene, he believed, would be beneficial; it would take his mind from his recent bereavement. Furthermore, he seemed to have no inclination to return to his law studies.

Finally he decided to comply with his father's wish at once. He went to Indianapolis to see the Honorable John Morris, a distinguished lawyer and family friend who had been his father's attorney. His father had not told Paul much of his business affairs but had referred him to Morris for all details.

Morris was an honest, unassuming gentleman. A man whom you would trust on first sight, and to whom you would disclose every confidence on closer acquaintance. He was a good lawyer in every sense of the word. One would not apply the title " Honorable " to him in his hearing or presence for he was so thoroughly democratic in his thoughts and ways that the word " Honorable," as a mark of distinction, was as objectionable to him as the title " Mister " was repugnant to Thomas Jefferson.

Morris was at this time some sixty-five years old, but keen and alert both in mind and body.

Some years previous he had been in politics and at one time represented his country in its consular service.

As Paul came into Morris's office, the latter arose to greet him and extended his hand, which the younger man clasped affectionately.

"I am very sorry for you, my boy, and I cannot tell you how it grieved me when I learned of the death of your parents. Your father and I were very close friends, and for more than thirty years I had enjoyed that friendship and admired his noble character." Paul saw by John Morris's countenance, the genuine emotion he was laboring to suppress. In this man there was neither guile nor artifice.

Paul told him his plans for the contemplated trip and Mr. Morris heartily approved of them. In his conversation with him Paul discovered that Mr. Morris knew more about his foreign relatives than he knew about them himself. Paul also learned for the first time the extent of his father's holdings. Other than the lands and personality he knew of, he found the elder Nehring had been a heavy stockholder in The Central Plow Works Company, located in the same city, and engaged in the manufacture of plows and agricultural instruments.

His attorney also told him that the stock was a sound investment and produced a fair income.

He went into the history of the concern and told his young client that its success had been most gratifying to his father, who had come to the rescue of the business at a time when it was on the verge of bankruptcy. The management of the concern was left largely with one Verne Woodruff, who had, with the stock he owned together with the stock possessed by the elder Nehring, controlled the corporation in its management and general development.

After going over the estate very carefully with Morris, Paul placed its settling and the management of his affairs generally in that person's hands; and then together they made a hasty inspection of the plant of The Central Plow Works Company.

CHAPTER IV

IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

AFTER a six months' sojourn in France with his mother's people Paul went on to Germany to visit his father's kin. While he had many relatives in both countries, in France he spent most of his time at the home of his mother's sister and in Germany his leisure time was devoted largely to his Uncle Henry and his family.

Paul was delighted with the sights and gaieties of France and traveled widely to see its principal places of interest, frequently accompanied by his cousin François, sometimes her mother and her pretty daughter, Annette.

His welcome was cordial in both countries and every effort was made for the entertainment and comfort of the " American Cousin." It was well that Paul did not realize, then, that these relatives so intelligent, so contented, so Christian, would within a short time be engaged in deadly conflict, tearing at each other's throats like wild beasts. That this should be so is but another bit of evidence of the demoralization of war, and the strain to which it invariably subjects the civilization of man.

Uncle Henry's family consisted of that aged man himself, his good wife but a few years his junior, Aunt Katherine, and their children, Helmer, Emil and Bertha. His eldest cousin, Carl, was a distinguished professor at the great university at Heidelberg.

Through the influence of Carl, Paul finally entered Heidelberg as a special student, and he was in the midst of his labors when the impending conflict caused him to change his plans and to decide to return home.

During his first year, Paul experienced considerable difficulty because his German was faulty but thanks to his beautiful and resourceful cousin Bertha, who was a linguist of considerable distinction, he soon overcame that obstacle. In after years he dwelt upon this period at Heidelberg as one of the most enjoyable and inspiring in his career. He found in the great German university an active spirit of moral uplift and an incentive to higher thoughts rather than a mere preparation for sordid gain. Its learned instructors, scholastic enthusiasms, their firm moral standards, their simplicity and method, were a personal source for the development of ethical and spiritual concepts of the loftiest order.

Paul was pleased with the gaiety and generous spirit of hospitality in France; in Germany he found a deep satisfaction in the orderly relation of everybody and everything—a harmonious unison that viewed as a whole, impressed him with the quality of grandeur. It was not difficult for him to understand, after the outbreak of the war, the unanimity of spirit of the German people in support of the government's course and their belief in the righteousness of their cause. Paul found that German laws and German administration of the laws were quite different from those in his own country. For there was a promptness in the enactment of needed rules of government and in their enforcement that served the interests not only of the community but of the individual better than the process of law in the United States. He saw, too, that everybody gave obedience to the laws, that everybody was for his neighbor as well as for himself, and that all were for the Fatherland. The longer he studied German institution and laws, the more he was impressed with their intelligent purpose which was to preserve the community as a unified whole, their fearlessness of cramping precedents, their freedom from class prejudices. Even a superficial study of these laws and institutions enabled him to understand Carl.

His cousin was a man of liberal views. Besides his philanthrophic pursuits, he had succeeded in impressing his liberal ideas of government upon the law-makers to such an extent that several wholesome statutes were directly traceable to his great mind; and that mind was as kind and as conscientious as it was deep. To Paul he seemed the most profound and most lovable of men.

CHAPTER V

CHARGED WITH ESPIONAGE

WHEN Paul left Germany he had no passport, and it would have done him little good at that time anyhow, as Germany was at the verge of war with Russia, France and Belgium, and England was to come into the game within a few days. Had he gone by way of Bordeaux, where some of his relatives lived, he might have fared better. But he was bent upon taking the most direct route for home. It proved to be the most circuitous in point of time. He had given careful thought to the situation and he believed that England would declare war. Consequently he was anxious to get aboard a vessel, outward bound, before that happened.

Conditions in London were hardly reassuring, for in addition to the congestion caused by homeward bound American travelers, the temper of the people was ugly. The first morning of his brief stay he found crowds collected in Trafalgar Square and orators haranguing from the steps of the Nelson monument. Further on, he came across a small shop, completely demolished. A bystander told him that it had been owned by a German and that the mob had wrought the destruction. In this immediate neighborhood there were at least three other shops which had suffered the same fate at the hands of the war frenzied crowds. The news-boys were crying, "All About The War With Germany!" and everywhere that he went, and every crowd that he mingled in, it was War! War! War! with Germany, and, quite naturally, everybody was against the Germans.

Paul began to realize that it was not the safest place in all the world for one bearing a German name. He realized that it would be necessary for him to procure a passport before he could sail. Would his German name get him into trouble? His mother's name was DeLance—why not make the change? Surely a Frenchman would be safer in England, during wartime, than a German. So, as he started toward the railroad station where he was to take the train to Southampton, Paul Nehring jumped out of his shoes, and, *eo instante,* Paul DeLance jumped in.

That he was a Frenchman now, in Southampton, there was no doubt. At least he satisfied his conscience as he stretched his weary limbs in bed that night, that so far as blood was concerned he was as much French as anything else. He decided to remove every vestige of residence in

Germany upon which doubt of his assumed character might be based.

The following morning, therefore, before he went down to his late breakfast, he carefully examined his clothes and his luggage. His trunks had long since vanished into the realm from which few trunks have returned and he had with him merely a good sized traveling bag. Fortunately his linen was mostly of American make and the suit he was wearing had been made in Paris in a hurried trip there in June. He satisfied himself that there was nothing German about his clothes or belongings and that he might well be DeLance, the Frenchman, with a taste for American articles.

Thoroughly at rest in this point, Paul strolled down to the lounge. The hotel was a small and somewhat exclusive one, with the air of bored impassivity and disinterest that distinguishes such institutions, comfortable enough, to be sure, but designed on the general principle of making evident the truth of the adage that an Englishman's home is his castle and he should keep to his keep. Judge of Paul's surprise, therefore, to find the lounge filled with an excited crowd struggling to get near a large bulletin suspended from one of the pillars, while here and there someone mounted a chair and addressed the crowd which in every instance, the moment the speaker rose into vision, began to cheer so loudly that not a word he uttered could be heard. Elbowing and pushing with the rest, Paul finally got within reading distance of the placard upon which he read—

ENGLAND
Declares War
on Germany

The KING EXPECTS Every
Englishman to do his duty

The effect upon Paul was curious. He had foreseen the trend of events, he knew that policies beyond the ken of the man on the street were shaping the course of happenings, but, somehow, deep down, he had not believed that the step would be taken. He gazed at the poster for a moment, disquietly. Then, as the thought came to him that his own country had nothing to do with the political, dynastic and commercial policies of the old world, his countenance cleared and he started to force his way toward the breakfast room, for he was literally ravenously hungry. He had gone hardly ten paces, however, when a heavy hand grasped his arm and he looked up to find a tall, huskily built man in civilian clothes addressing him.

" You'll have to come with me," he said, speaking in a low tone.

Paul started to protest but as he did so, the crowd about him turned towards him as a man and their glances, in which suspicion and menace mingled, caused him to desist. The man who had seized him, moreover, whispered in his ear to come quietly and unobtrusively since the men in the lounge were in a dangerous mood and resistance would be worse than useless. Swallowing his wrath—for he understood at once the wisdom of the advice—Paul accompanied his captor and within a few minutes they were seated in a cab and were rapidly rolling along, whither he had no idea.

They finally stopped in front of a building, which judging from the crowds passing in and out, was the scene of great activity and his companion conducted him up a flight of stairs, and then into a large room. At one end of the room was a long table, at the head of which sat a distinguished looking man in khaki uniform and along either side of which were other men similarly, garbed.

" This man tallies with the description, exactly," said Paul's escort, after he had conducted him within a few feet of the table. " He is a German and appears to be a student; furthermore, an examination of his room at his hotel this morning showed that he had been engaged in destroying papers of some kind, and trying to burn them."

Paul realized that it was a case of mistaken identity, but as the city was in a state of feverish excitement, he knew that his predicament might become serious. But he was determined to make the best of it.

"But I am a Frenchman," he said, with a bold air—and he was truly as French as he was German.

The distinguished looking officer at the head of the table, smiled slightly, as he replied: "From your general appearance, young man, your physiognomy and build, I don't think that France will ever exhibit you or your likeness as a typical Nineteen Fourteen Gaul."

"He looks deadly German to me, like the Kaiser," said a thin, elderly, man with a querulous voice, and then they all laughed.

Paul had been quite apprehensive, now he was getting angry. Not that he objected to being compared with the Kaiser. From what Paul had seen and learned of the Kaiser while in Germany, he considered him a very efficient and capable ruler, and he knew that in all the world there is not a ruler who is so generally loved and respected by his own people as is the Kaiser of Germany. He was not deficient in a good robust American sense of humor, but to be made an object of malicious ridicule, riled him and he retorted hotly: " I would have you understand that I am an American—and I won't stand for this impudence."

" You told us a moment ago that you were a Frenchman," said Paul's captor.

" He speaks English fluently, perhaps he's an Englishman," said another man at the table, and they all laughed again.

Paul's indignation was mounting even higher, and he responded with emphasis: " If I have not made my position clear, I would have you understand that I am French by descent—my name is DeLance, that ought to convince you—but I am a native born citizen of the United States, that's where I live, and that's the place I was bound for when this gentleman interfered. And now, I demand to know the reasons for my detention."

" You will know them soon enough," replied the officer at the head of the table. Paul's captor proceeded at once and expertly to search him. He could discover no evidence of his name on any of the papers in his possession. Paul had successfully destroyed every one of them and the absence of identifying documents served only to increase the evident suspicion against him. His captor then, to Paul's surprise, produced his hand-bag and in the presence of the board opened and examined its contents. But Paul felt quite secure as he had carefully fortified himself in that respect, also. His captor took out his pocket knife and proceeded to rip open the lining of the hand-bag. An expression of triumph spread over his countenance as he withdrew his hand full of German gold, and deposited it upon the table.

Paul remembered then, that a few days before his departure from Germany, as a double precaution and knowing that gold is good anywhere the world over, he had placed a quantity of German gold coins under a false bottom in the bag, and had it sewed in securely, and beyond ordinary detection.

" Pretty strong evidence," said one of the gentlemen, as he fingered the pile on the table.

" Had he finished the job, the Kaiser's money would have been well spent," said another, and his voice had a serious tone. They all looked serious, in fact.

" Have you anything further to say? " said the officer in charge, as Paul mopped his brow.

" Nothing, sir, at this time," said Paul, " But whatever the charges may be, I am anxious to return home at once, and I shall demand a speedy trial by jury under the laws of England. I am a lawyer, myself, and am familiar with English jurisprudence, and consequently know my rights. I am innocent, and I shall prove it."

"Very well," said the officer, "If you demand a speedy trial, you shall have it. However the laws of England do not guarantee you a trial by jury, as we are now in a state of war with the country which we are confident that you represent and the offense with which you are charged comes within the military jurisdiction, you will be tried by court-martial. If you insist upon an immediate trial, we shall call upon that court to be convened at once."

While Paul was still in the dark as to the specific charges, he now fully realized the gravity of the situation. If, in his indignation a few moments before, his temperature had risen to the boiling point, certainly it had taken a decided drop now; for his knees shook, and cold chills crept up his spinal column. He drew himself together and set his wits to working. Now, when he learned that he was to be tried by court-martial, he was less anxious for a speedy trial. He remembered that in the defense of criminal cases, generally, it was often advisable to employ as many dilatory pleas as possible in order to prevent the case from coming to trial speedily—or at all. And he knew that many a defendant deserving of severe punishment had been saved by dilatory pleas, and the consequent mellowing influence of time. He knew, also, that in the English practice (which he had studied) the dilatory pleas were many and effective.

" Under the circumstances," he said aloud, " I shall not insist on my full rights in this matter. I have relatives not far distant, in France, who can prove my innocence. I shall not even request any formal charges to be presented at this time, and shall be pleased to have you extend the hearing for several days. I shall convince you of my innocence. In any event I do not believe it is your desire to take the life of an American, wrongfully.

" We will give you a chance, young man, but the circumstances are strongly against you," said the officer in charge.

Paul's captor conducted him, then, down the stairs and into the waiting cab, and he was immediately driven to the prison. But before confining him in the cell, he was stripped of all his apparel, and given other raiment with which to clothe himself. His own clothing and other belongings, were, apparently, confiscated.

His situation was, in the vernacular, " no joke." He realized quite clearly now that he had made a mistake in not calling himself an American at first for although he might have had immediate difficulty in proving his identity, the problem that would have then presented itself would have been infinitely less difficult than his present one. The fact that he had changed his name prohibited his calling for the assistance of either the local American consul or the Ambassador in London. Failure to do so would, he now realized, go to increase the suspicion against him. Why should not an American appeal to his representative? Paul realized ruefully that he had acted precipitately. His only resource now was to get in touch with one of his French relatives. He finally prevailed upon the authorities to permit him to send a telegram to his cousin François at Bordeaux. In the telegram he informed his cousin that he was detained by reason of mistaken identity, and signed the message, "Your Cousin, Paul DeLance." He hoped that his cousin would understand the situation; and the fact that he had used his mother's name, DeLance, and the descriptive "Your Cousin," would warn François to be cautious in his disclosures until he should be able to confer with him.

François came as soon as he could, identified Paul as his cousin and gave his name as DeLance. He admitted to the authorities, however, that Paul had been in Germany attending Heidelberg, but that he was an American and could not be a spy. From François, Paul learned for the first time just what the charges were that had been brought against him. A day or so before his arrival, an attempt had been made by a German student—so it was asserted—to wreck and destroy great military stores en route to a seaport on the channel coast.

François remained in England a week, and occupied his time energetically on behalf of his cousin, with telling effect. He almost convinced the officials that the gold discovered in Paul's possession was simply for emergency purposes. They refused to give him his liberty at once, however, for they declared that even though Paul was of French descent and an American, under the circumstances, having sojourned in Germany several years, he might still be a German spy and the guilty person. They deemed it best to keep him in confinement for some time yet.

Paul took advantage of the change in attitude towards him to demand better quarters. He said he was willing to spend his German gold for that purpose so that the government would not be put to any additional expense on his account. He was told, however, that his German gold had long since been confiscated, but that if he should eventually be proved innocent of the charges, his money would be returned to him, not the specific gold, but its full equivalent, and in a specie just as good for all his purposes.

The next day Paul was taken from the prison and removed to a large stone house on the outskirts of the city. The house was old-fashioned, apparently designed and built for residence purposes. It stood a short distance back from the sea, upon a prominent rise of ground, and commanded a full view of the bay. The structure was three stories in height. The third story of the house was his place of abode. There were but three rooms on this floor, two of which were accessible from a large central room. This large room proved to be the only one furnished. The entrance from the stairway landing was barred by a heavy oaken door, and the windows were grated.

The large room was very simply furnished—a chair, a table with books and magazines, and a cot in one corner. Paul had access to all the rooms during the daytime, and was therefore able to get much exercise. At night an attendant placed a clasp around his wrist, from which depended a chain of considerable length; the chain itself was firmly fastened to one of the walls, so placed that he could comfortably occupy the cot.

Paul's attendant was a handsome young fellow, about twenty years of age, dressed in soldier's uniform. He was very considerate of his charge, and seemed to sympathize with him, and was frank to admit to Paul that he did not believe him guilty. He also informed his prisoner that the military authorities no longer believed him to be the one who attempted to commit the offense, but that they deemed it necessary to detain him longer, until the matter had been fully investigated. The young man suggested to him that he enlist the American consul in his behalf, but Paul discouraged the idea and informed him that he was confident his relative from France had fully identified him, and that there was nothing further to be done.

His attendant brought him food three times a day, books and magazines, as well as flowers at various times, but refused to give him any of the current newspapers or to inform him of what was transpiring in the war.

CHAPTER VI

A FAIR PRISON KEEPER

PAUL had been in his new quarters but a few days when one morning he was surprised to discover that he had a new and novel sort of keeper. Someone knocked at his door, and in response to his invitation to enter, the door opened and disclosed a slender young woman, of medium height, with dark hair and large expressive eyes.

" My brother has been detailed for other duties and I shall be your keeper temporarily. We are short of men and they accepted my offer to take his place," she said.

" Then I hope his new duties will detain him quite a long time," Paul replied with a smile, as their eyes met.

She blushed slightly and placed upon the table his breakfast tray.

" My brother informed me that you make a very good prisoner—and that you won't try to get away. He doesn't think you are guilty. Of course I shall expect your good conduct to continue while you are in my charge," she said, with an amusing little air of authority, not unmixed with a somewhat nervous timidity.

"I cannot see how it could be otherwise," he replied, "when you have all of the artillery on your side." And he pointed to the butt of an automatic that was visible above its holster, attached to the broad leather belt around her waist.

"I am taking no chances," she replied, somewhat stiffly. Then, as if distressed at the implication of her speech, she smiled in a somewhat embarrassed fashion and hastily turned to the door.

"But can you really shoot?" Paul asked in honest amazement.

She turned and glanced at him a moment suspiciously, then replied with emphasis, "Of course I can!"

"Well," said Paul, "I'm from Missouri! Show me!"

"Are you really from Missouri?" she said almost impulsively.

"No," he replied quizzically, "I'm a Hoosier. I've been in Missouri and the folks there and at home are pretty much alike. Don't you know what 'I'm from Missouri' means?"

"Indeed, I do!" she answered. "I know about Missouri too, and its mules. We expect to use many of them in this war. My uncle sailed for America only a few days ago, and I'm sure he has 'Missouri mules' on his shopping list."

"Well, I should like to see you shoot for all that," answered Paul. "It would be a kind of harmless cocktail—unless you happened to aim at me. Beside, it would bring back old times. Once while visiting a friend in Missouri, we used to go shooting every morning before breakfast. Do you see that sparrow? Can you hit it?"

The window was open and through the grating a sparrow could be plainly seen, sitting on a twig of the tree whose branches swung near the window. The saucy little fellow was bobbing his head from side to side, and craning his neck, in his eagerness to peer into the window. Winged impudent curiosity is a synonym for sparrow.

"I could hit it but I won't," she replied. "But I can destroy his support—that won't hurt him, and it will be a good lesson to him not to peer into people's windows."

She raised the revolver, and almost instantly it flashed. The twig was cut close to the branch and the sparrow dropped a few feet still clutching his severed support, until it had recovered from its bewilderment sufficiently to spread its wings and fly away.

"Good!" said Paul. "That's some shooting! The Germans can be thankful that you're not on the firing line."

She slipped the weapon back into its holster and turned to leave. Suddenly she turned and exclaimed apologetically, "I almost forgot to remove your handcuff, so that you may get at your breakfast before it is cold."

She took a key from her belt, and again drew forth the automatic. Paul extended his wrist. With her right hand she held the automatic, with her left she tried to unlock the handcuff; but she was unable to do so with one hand. Nervously she replaced the weapon in its holster, and with her right hand took hold of his wrist to steady it —and unlocked the band. As it fell to the floor, his wrist—which was upturned—slipped through her hand until his hand met hers, and—voluntarily or involuntarily—he clasped her fingers, and held them for a moment. Her eyes met his with a half bewildered look, and color flooded her cheeks. Then, dropping her gaze, she quickly withdrew her hand, and hurriedly left the room, bolting the door.

Paul continued in the custody of his fair keeper for several days. His conversations with her, however, were very brief. Since the first time she loosened the handcuff from his wrist, she had been very careful not to allow him to touch her hand, and kept him at a distance. One day when she brought his morning meal, she told him that her brother would be back that night.

" So you will be in my charge only a few hours longer," she concluded.

" But surely you will come up to see me sometimes, even if your brother is here. Don't you realize that I get very—very lonely, at times? " he replied.

" But my brother would not allow me to make social calls on a spy, an enemy of England! It would be an act of disloyalty," she protested with an air whose seriousness was well assumed.

" I am not a spy," he retorted heatedly. " I am just a plain American citizen, caught in this crazy European mix-up and if I ever get out of it believe me—! "

" And if ever you get out of it," she cut him short with a fleeting smile, " will you go back to Missouri? I don't believe you have ever been in Missouri," she continued saucily, " unless the Kaiser sent you there."

" Well, if I ever get out of this, I'll show you what speed is—considering my treatment. Just think of it! An American citizen, tied up with a chain every night, and loosened in the morning, as if he were a dog! And really, I am not accorded even the consideration which a respectable pup receives in my own country! " His anger was only half assumed.

"And why! pray?" she asked, as her eyes opened wide in wonderment.

"Because in America," he continued, "on any fine day you will see in the parks many dogs with spangled collars—and attached to long chains—out for an airing, and each led around by some fine lady—its keeper! I'm even denied that privilege, here."

The wonderment in her eyes died out, and they almost closed as she laughed heartily. Then she answered meaningly.

"But your case is different. You are a different breed. The dogs you mention are not 'dogs of war!'"

He laughed.

"Not quite, Miss——— What shall I call you? You have never told me your name."

"And I never shall," she replied.

"Why?"

"Because an alien enemy," she said, "should have no information of people and things. He would use it to their injury. Besides, I have a brother in the secret service, and you'd be looking for him, sometime, if you knew our names."

"But I will find it out from your uncle, who, you told me, had gone to America. That is, if I ever get free, again."

"You do not know his name, either, and you do not know what he looks like, and I shall not tell you. Besides, he will probably use an assumed name while over there."

"But I shall know your uncle if I see him," he replied very confidently.

"And how?" she asked.

"I will tell you," he continued. "If I meet a dignified gentleman over there, with lordly bearing, trying to convince a Missouri mule that it ought to violate its neutrality and join the Allies, I shall know he is your Uncle. You told me he had Missouri mules on his shopping list."

She laughed. "Now I know you are a spy, and a clever one at that, or you would not have been able to use such a poor clue to so great an advantage. I know you are too dangerous to be free—but I shall unchain you only once more, anyway." As she spoke she unlocked the handcuff.

She was about to close the door and leave the room, when he said; "I am very fond of music. I have heard you playing and singing; I'm sure it was you. Would you mind leaving the door open the next time you sing? That is, providing I assume these shackles, so that you won't be running any risks."

"Would you really enjoy it?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied. "I would appreciate it even more if I could see the performer as well as hear her—you could chain me to the instrument, you know."

"I'm afraid Aunt Flora wouldn't let me—though from your likeness in the paper just after you were arrested, she said you seemed to be a perfect gentleman. She believes fully in your innocence and sympathizes deeply with you."

"How nice," he replied. "And don't you?" he continued, a rather wistful note creeping into his voice but looking her squarely in the eyes.

She met his gaze for a moment, then glanced at the floor. "I—I—do, really," she said. Then looking up at him, she continued. "But I must go now. I'll find out from Aunt Flora what she thinks about your coming down." She bolted the door, and left Paul with his breakfast.

Paul sat at his meal a long time that morning. The events of the last few weeks passed through his mind and he dwelt on the strange fate that had befallen him—a fate as unwarranted as it was unexpected. What would happen next? Then he smiled broadly. Of one thing, however, he was certain. Here was a young woman, pretty, of exceptional intelligence, bright and witty; and whatever may have been her opinions and thoughts of him, he knew that she was tearing at his heart's strings, ever since he first met her.

Not since his boyhood episode with Gladys, had he felt so stirred by any woman. But Gladys was a thing of the past, a childish romance, he was grown to manhood, now, and his affection for her was that of a mature mind. He was still sitting before his breakfast table when a gentle knock sounded at the door. In response to his "come in," the door opened and his fair keeper stood before him.

"You are not hungry this morning. You have not touched your breakfast," she said reprovingly, as she glanced at the table.

"Oh!" he answered, then hesitated for a moment while he searched for a reply that would not reveal his embarrassment. Finally he stammered, "You see, I had a presentiment that you would bring me something exceptionally good for lunch, and I was simply keeping hungry."

"And you may be right," she added. "That is, if you will accept the invitation. Aunt Flora says that you may lunch with us—if you will. But she said, that in order to run no risks, you must have the chain on. She also said that you could wear the chain with the cuff placed around your boot instead of your wrist, so that it won't inconvenience you while dining. I have brought you a larger one. You can put it on the chain like this—and you can have it on when I call for you later."

"And am I to stay for the concert, and does 'Melba' sing?" he said with an inquiring smile.

"That will depend upon your deportment, and the impression you create on Aunt Flora. I think possibly you can." She smiled sweetly as she picked up the tray with his breakfast still on it, and departed, carefully closing the door.

CHAPTER VII

THE VERANDA OVERLOOKING THE SEA

SHORTLY after noon his fair keeper came to conduct him to the lower floor. The iron ring was fastened securely about the ankle. Holding the chain in her right hand she followed him.

His limb bound—his pretty keeper bringing up the rear, holding the chain—the fact that he was not unhappy in this plight—struck him as comical, and reminded him of the time when as a boy he had attempted to rope a calf. But instead of settling about the calf's neck, the noose coiled round its front leg, a result which led to a half hour's antics on the animal's part that even now, years after, caused him to break into laughter. Upon being questioned he told her the tale and had just finished as they reached the lower floor.

"Hush!" she said, as foot-steps were heard. "That is Aunt Flora! Don't laugh! She will think it unbecoming and it will make a bad impression. You will soon find that she will be talking to you as an interesting subject. She has already been reading your character from the picture in the papers. You know, she claims to be very learned in psychology, phrenology and physiognomy, and all other 'ologies and 'ognomies. Only yesterday she said that judging from your likeness in the newspaper, you possessed a strong character, but that you were inclined to be morose, at times, to look on the dark side. I don't think she is right about the moroseness. She says you are French, all right. Aunt comes from French stock, herself; she's a Norman."

As they entered the room 'Aunt Flora' came to meet them. She was a woman of about fifty years of age, well preserved, and with an open and pleasing countenance whose chief feature was a pair of keen, gray black eyes, whose glances literally darted. Her dignity and bearing evidenced great worldly sophistication.

"Mr. ——," said his fair escort, and hesitated.

"DeLance," he responded.

"Mr. DeLance, this is Aunt Flora," she continued, and Paul clasped the outstretched hand. Aunt Flora looked at him pleasantly, then darted a momentary keen glance at him, but it was only momentary. She evidently caught herself in the act, Paul thought, and he knew her training gave her the skill to conceal, almost instantly, the curiosity as to himself with which her mind was busied.

"We thought perhaps you would enjoy lunching out," said Aunt Flora, pleasantly, as she led the way to the dining-room. "I assure you, Mr. DeLance that I could not extend this hospitality if I believed you to be the guilty person. I am convinced that it is a case of mistaken identity, and that you are being wronged—I hope it will proceed no further."

"And if I were guilty," he replied, "I should be reluctant about accepting this kindness at your hands."

Aunt Flora seated Paul opposite herself, Paul thought, so that she might have a good view of him in order to continue her character study at first hand.

"To be candid with you, Mr. DeLance," she continued, "from the moment I saw your likeness in the newspaper, I became convinced that you were no spy. Your general features are altogether opposite to one with an inclination for such business, and we know that the German government has none but experts. Now when I see you in person, I am thoroughly satisfied that my conclusions are right, for I claim to be a very careful reader of human nature."

Paul with difficulty restrained a smile. The good lady's manner as she uttered her conclusion, could be described only as ex cathedra. There was a finality about it that admitted not only of no contradition but even of no doubt or questioning. He felt, rather than saw, that his fair gaoler's lips twitched but he kept his eyes studiously fixed upon his plate. After a moment, his hostess began to speak of other matters with a range and sweep of interest, a felicity of phrase and epigrammatic quickness of judgment that charmed him. With rare social skill she soon put him quite at his ease as a purely ordinary guest and talked with the utmost freedom.

She informed Paul that her husband had gone to America on important business, and that he might spend a year there, perhaps longer. She added that if he should decide to stay in America for any considerable length of time, in all probability she and her niece would join him a few months hence.

"I have always wanted to tour America," she said. "They tell me even its vastness is inspiring, and that its mountains, its lakes and its mighty streams have a different character than what is to be seen elsewhere."

Paul restrained a smile at the thought that if she ever did come to America, and extended her character studies to nature itself, she would be kept quite busy indeed.

When the meal was ended, Paul was escorted to the parlor in which the piano was located. This room, like the others, was simply but substantially furnished. Apparently these were only temporary quarters. Aunt Flora had informed him that they had resided there only since war was declared, and that they would not remain after the cessation of hostilities. Near the piano was a large double window, extending almost to the floor which opened out on the veranda that faced the sea. On the veranda, trellised over the vines, were arranged many plants.

Paul seated himself near this window and from it gazed longingly at the ocean, the path to home and security.

" If I may suggest the program, I would prefer that we begin by singing ' America,' " said Paul as his fair keeper deposited the chain in a heap by the side of his chair.

" Very well," she replied, as she seated herself at the instrument. " It is good policy, always, to try to please the audience. But it seems to me that as this is a free concert, the audience ought to be satisfied with what is given and not assume the right of dictation."

" But I shall pay," he retorted.

" And how? The newspaper reports were to the effect that the authorities had appropriated all your German gold."

" To a great musician, or a prima donna," he replied, " gold is not the only consideration—it is but trash in comparison with other things. The plaudits of the public, the showers of roses that almost bury her, the profusion of bravos from an appreciative audience, especially from the sterner part, are much more valuable!" He stepped to her side. "And I shall be delighted to contribute to you all of these."

He bent down close to her face. He saw the color come into her cheeks, but she pretended that she did not understand. She sang 'America,' and Paul joined in. He had been yearning for his native land these many days, and the singing of his country's national anthem stirred his heart. His voice quivered as he sang. She was quick to observe it, and to cheer him up, struck up that lively tune, 'Yankee Doodle,' and sang it through. When she concluded, he shook her hand.

"That was very fine, indeed," he exclaimed. "You sing it quite as well as an American."

"We should sing it better," she replied. "We have been singing it longer, we sang it first, you know."

For nearly an hour she played, her selections ranging from the classics to "It's a Long way to Tipperary," and in each she displayed technical skill of the highest order, joined to imagination and feeling. She was still playing when Paul stepped through the open French window and out upon the veranda. He was plucking flowers from the plants, when she came quickly to his side.

"You have broken your parole! You were not accorded this liberty," she exclaimed.

"But I meant no offense," he replied. "I was just preparing a bouquet to give the performer." He presented the flowers to her. "Will you accept this as a small token of my appreciation of your art, Miss——? What shall I call you?"

"What would you call me, if you were to name me?" she asked, roguishly.

"I would give you the prettiest name I know," he replied.

"And what is that?"

"I used to think that the prettiest name I ever knew was Gladys. But if you will tell me yours, I may change my mind about it."

"Then if I comprehend," she rejoined, "you thought the name you mentioned was pretty because the particular bearer of it was pretty. Will you tell me more about her?"

"I haven't seen or heard from her for many years. We attended school together, but she went away a long time ago, and I have not heard from her since." He realized suddenly that she had drawn him out unwittingly, that he had disclosed a cherished secret.

"No doubt she was a lovely girl and worthy of your affection?"

"Yes," he replied, "but that was long ago. It was just a boyish fancy. I have fully recovered from it."

"No doubt," she answered. "You men get over such things quickly. Not so with a woman. Perhaps she has been pining for you all these years. And yet—if you saw her again, maybe your boyish fancy would become a mature reality."

"It might," he said, "had I not met another whose lovely presence possesses me utterly and exclusively."

She blushed slightly, glanced at him subtly, then looking out to sea she continued:

"You should have left a little corner at least, for Gladys. It isn't fair, is it, to crowd her out entirely?"

They were standing, facing the sea, and both were looking out over the waters. The day was warm and almost sultry, a typical English August day. In the distance a large passenger liner slowly steamed away, a great trail of smoke marking its course. Near the shore lay three formidable warships, their decks cleared and their mighty, protruding guns plainly visible. For several minutes Paul and the girl stood silent, viewing the scene. Then several transports, outward bound, came into view, crowded to their rails with soldiers. And as they gazed, they both understood.

"Poor fellows," Paul finally cried. "Many of them have left these shores never again to return. Many have said farewell to those who are near and dear, for the last time."

He glanced at her and noticed tears standing in her eyes.

"Oh! Why do men fight and kill each other, why?" she asked in a despairing tone.

"Why?" he replied, "Why? Well I suppose it's human nature, for uncivilized men to belabor each other in rags, even to shoot, club, kill. As for those great groups of men more or less civilized, that we call nations—that is a different matter. Heaven knows I have pondered that question these last few weeks, I have had little else to do. I suppose it is because nations are younger and less civilized than the individual man. You see the science of government is so poorly developed that nations believe the only way to settle their disputes satisfactorily is to club each other, as it were. In the remote past, when one may have had a difference with another, each donned his shield and seized his spear or battle-club and leaped into the arena. While the populace looked on, these disputants tried their law-suit. The victor was triumphantly carried from the field, and the vanquished was borne to his family and his friends, a bleeding shattered semblance of manhood, or a mangled corpse. But after a time, that folly and wastefulness of settling disputes and differences by such methods was recognized, and long ago courts and juries and boards of arbitration were established for determining right between man and man, so that no longer is the decision dependent on strength and skill and valor, but on reason and justice. We have made steady progress for many decades, in science and the arts. See that great ship! What a tribute to man's skill! The element of electricity we have harnessed in many forms; and that tall spire stretching itself toward heaven is no doubt at this very moment receiving wireless messages from a great distance. And those human birds, it is marvelous!"

As they stood looking, two hydroplanes swooped down, almost to the water, then hovering for a moment, dropped to the surface, sped along for a few minutes, and then up again into the air, and away—as gently and as gracefully as seagulls.

"But in the science of government," Paul continued, "we have not made proportionate progress, for in that science, in some branches at least, figuratively speaking, we are still living in the dark ages. To-day, when nations disagree and have disputes and rights to be determined, they resort to the same principle employed by those primitive men who donned their shields, their spears and battle-clubs. The only difference now is that the instruments employed are mighty armies and destructive navies. It is barbarism, wrong in principle, and must eventually be eliminated. If the principle of force is wrong between man and man, it is wrong between nations, for nations are but aggregations of individuals. If the employment of armies and navies is right, then our whole system of legal ethics is wrong, and our assertions of Christianity and brotherhood are lies."

"You are right," she said as she smiled at him, the tears standing in her eyes. "Now I *know* that you are not a spy, for one who thinks as you think could not be engaged in seeking the best avenues for getting at people to destroy them."

He turned and looked her squarely in the face, and in his voice there was much emotion.

"I have no desire to destroy anyone," he said. "My regard for mankind is ardent. I believe in the brotherhood of man. It may be my utopian dream, and with the contentions, strife and hatreds that this war will generate, I fear many will so regard it. But I believe in it. The last words of my father, as he lay on his death-bed were that I do something for mankind, and, God helping, I shall fulfill his wish."

They were standing facing each other. Almost unconsciously he placed his arms about her and gently drew her to him. Her face was on his bosom, his face was buried in her hair. She made no resistance. And thus they stood, neither speaking, for a moment.

At last he raised her head and their eyes met.

" I do not know your name," he said huskily. " I should want to change it, in part, if I knew. I have told you the secret of my interest in mankind. Since first I saw you I have learned to love you—dearly—ardently. I have even learned to enjoy my imprisonment here, because I was so near you. I shall regret the day I must leave, if I go without you. Tell me that you return my love, that I may claim you as my own, and that I may carry you away from these scenes of strife to America, the land of peace! "

His voice was tender. She looked up at him, struggling for self control.

" But you forget," she said, " that you are a prisoner of war, charged with espionage. What if the British government should find you guilty and mete out punishment? "

" But I am not guilty," he replied with emphasis. " I am innocent, and I shall prove it. I shall demand an immediate trial and when I am free, shall come to claim you. Tell me that I may! " he added fervently.

"I'm sorry, but—it cannot be," she replied sadly.

"But why? Don't you love me? Tell me that you do."

"I—I—cannot tell you that. I must not—I cannot."

"And why?"

"I have, I—I—"

"You have promised another?"

"Yes."

"But does he love you?"

"Yes, devotedly."

"And you love him?" He asked painfully, anxiously.

"You have no right to ask me that question," she replied, proudly.

"But I do have the right, the best right in the world, the right prompted by my love for you, and the belief in my soul that you reciprocate my love," he cried.

"But if you know that I love you," she replied, "why do you ask me to answer a question that you seem to be able to answer in your own way?"

"Where is he?"

Her lips trembled pitifully and for a moment framed no words. Silently she pointed out to sea, and said brokenly. "In one of those transports! His country called—he responded!"

He released her from his embrace, as approaching foot-steps on the graveled walk attracted their attention. Turning in the direction of the sound, Paul saw a well dressed gentleman ascending the steps leading to the veranda. As he perceived them, he raised his hat and bowed.

"Is this Mr. Paul DeLance?" he asked.

"I am Mr. DeLance," Paul replied.

"Then I have information of great moment to you," the gentleman rejoined. Both Paul and his fair companion detected a graveness in his appearance and mien that seemed ominous. As the girl beheld his seriousness, she became deathly pale, swayed unsteadily, and would have fallen had not Paul caught her in his arms.

"You have not come to take him away to be—executed?" she cried, a great fear upon her face and in her voice.

"No," he replied, his face suddenly breaking into a broad smile, "not unless Mr. DeLance so desires. This document," he continued, as he handed a folded paper to Paul, "is an order from the court, dismissing the charges and discharging the defendant."

"Thank God!" she exclaimed, fervently. "I'm so glad for you!" and she seized his hand and shook it warmly.

The gentleman stepped over to Paul and clasped his hand. "I desire to congratulate you on your narrow escape. There is indeed great similarity in looks—the guilty person was discovered and he paid the penalty this morning with his life. Poor fellow. But it is the fortune of war. He confessed all and died bravely, said that his own life was but trivial in comparison with the cause he gave it for—that if he had a thousand lives to give, he would sacrifice them, if need be, upon his country's altar.

"But speaking for the authorities and my country," he continued to Paul, "I desire to offer you an apology for the inconvenience suffered by reason of this mistake. Your valuables and belonging will be restored to you immediately, and your passport will be issued without a question. A steamer leaves to-night. Will you take it? If so, I shall have your necessary credentials issued at once. And, by the way, will you sail as Paul DeLance, or as—Paul Nehring?" he added, and his face broke into a broad smile again, as he eyed him quizzically.

Paul returned his gaze with eyes opened wide in surprise.

"Paul DeLance, the prisoner, will still remain," he replied. He reached forth his hand. The girl understood and placed the key in his palm. He inserted the key, the clasp with the chain attached fell from his leg, and he turned to his questioner. "But Paul Nehring, the free man, will return to America! I shall sail as Paul Nehring."

At this remark the girl picked up the fetters. She disengaged the clasp from the chain and handed it to him.

"On behalf of Paul DeLance I present to Paul Nehring a memento of said Paul DeLance's extreme hardships and privations, while a prisoner in England," she said, smiling gravely, and returning her smile, he accepted the token.

"If you are ready," the gentleman said, "I will take you with me, and we shall proceed to get you set right again. The motor-car is waiting."

Bowing courteously he stepped down to the graveled walk and waited.

Paul took her hand in his, and looked longingly into her eyes. She broke the brief silence, as she smiled and said.

"I wish you a safe and happy journey, Mr. DeLance—or Mr. Nehring, rather."

"But you will tell me your name, now?"

"No, it is not necessary. It cannot be otherwise," she replied sadly but firmly.

He raised her hand and touched it lightly with his lips.

"I shall always remember you, always, and God bless you." Releasing her hand he turned and descended the steps to where the gentleman was waiting, and together they walked to the motor-car.

As they were speeding away, he turned his face toward the veranda and saw her still standing there gazing after him. As she saw him turn she waved her handkerchief, a picture that Paul was to remember all the days of his life.

CHAPTER VIII

AN EXPEDITIONARY PARTY

THE steamship in which Paul sailed arrived in New York after a slow and somewhat stormy trip. The voyage across was without incident, except that he was taken violently seasick, and had not fully recovered upon his arrival. His studious application in the university, together with his experiences in Europe just before the war, had somewhat worn on him, a condition which tended to aggravate the sickness. Nor did his late and unsuccessful affair of the heart contribute to his physical well-being—and with it his mind was still burdened. So, when he arrived in New York he could proceed no further; and his attending physician said that it was absolutely necessary that he take a long vacation, "with plenty of fresh air and plenty of rest."

A few days after his arrival, looking over the register of the hotel at which he was a guest, he discovered the signature of an old friend. John Long had roomed with Paul for two years while they were at college, and this was their first meeting in several years. John was a tried friend and

Paul trusted him fully. He called upon John that very evening. His old chum, after their greetings were over, looked at him anxiously and exclaimed.

"But you do not look your old self, Paul. You seem sort of peaked and worried, and down in the mouth. What's the matter with you—anything I can help you with?"

Paul explained that he had been studying hard in Germany before the war, and related his adventures and hardships on his return home. He mentioned with rather elaborate casualness his fair gaoler, "the little girl, whose name I never learned."

John listened to the narrative attentively, and when Paul concluded, he cried:

"Why, it is just like a story! But I do not like the ending of it—it is too abrupt! You should have stayed a few days longer, Paul, after you were released. No girl would have taken the pains to look after your comforts in the manner that this fair gaoler did, if she had not been deeply interested in you—and you a stranger and charged with capitol offense! It stands to reason, Paul. You should have stayed and carried the girl by storm, if need be!"

"But, John, I knew that she had given her promise to another man," answered Paul. "I did not think it fair to try and induce her to break her word. More than that, he had gone to the front to fight for his country. Out there in the trenches, he is looking forward to the day he'll return to England alive and to her. If I should have won her, and she should have written him breaking the engagement, who knows what might have happened? She told me that he adores her, I should not care to face that possible tragedy."

When Paul stopped, John laughed.

"Oh, pshaw!" he said; "you are too sentimental, too considerate of the other fellow's welfare. Remember the old saying, Paul, 'All is fair in love and war.'

"Well he's in the war, and you're in love! However, your chances of getting out whole are much better than his. You may recover. But if he's in that hell over there, well—he won't get out whole."

"I hope he will," said Paul simply. "She has suffered enough already."

"Oh, well, I hope he gets out all right," said John, "although I am not going to hope entirely as you do. If I hope at all I shall earnestly desire that you retrace your steps, and stick till you get her. Your trusting that the other fellow will succeed may be a lofty sentiment, and all that sort of thing. I know when one has been disappointed in love, one sometimes feels awfully charitable toward the other fellow. But when one *does* arrive at that stage of feeling, it is a sure symptom of the severity of the affliction, and something should be done for the patient, at once. In your case, since you have no intentions of returning to her, there is but one remedy."

"And what is that remedy, Doctor Long?" Paul asked.

"I'll tell you," said John. "To-morrow Ed Rinehart, (you remember Ed, don't you?) will meet me here. We expect to spend the remainder of the week in New York and on Monday we start on a several months' trip to South America and Panama. We could have a fine old time if you'd join us. We'll cure you of the dumps, and health will naturally follow, and you'll come back with a Brazilian tint and a herculean physique."

Ed Rinehart arrived, sure enough, the following day and between his arguments and John Long's, Paul was finally persuaded to pack his belongings and start for Brazil.

CHAPTER IX

NEUTRAL IN NAME ONLY

EARLY the following June—to be precise, June 7, 1915—Paul Nehring, his face tanned, his frame showing the health giving effects of nearly a year in the open air, for the Brazilian trip had stretched out months longer than they had anticipated, sprawled in a deck chair on the screened and shaded veranda of a cottage near Panama. But for all his lazy attitude, Paul was neither inactive nor inattentive. He had come back to civilization only a few days before to find a mass of correspondence waiting him. When that had been disposed of, there remained the task of catching up in the world's history, especially a history so replete with incident, disaster and innovation, as the past year's had been. Books, reviews and magazines were piled knee deep all about him; the floor was littered with papers, and chairs and tables overflowed with reports, pamphlets and stout tomes. And now Paul was resting, digesting what he had read, trying to discover in this wild war of charges and counter charges, of invectives and slander, of words breathing hatred of Germany and counsels of peace and reason, what was the real sentiment of the great bulk of sober, sane, judicious, unhasty Americans.

There could be no question of the original intention of the country. Through its chief executive, the American nation had declared its neutrality in no uncertain terms and cautioned the people to be "neutral in fact as well as in name" and "to put a curb on every transaction which might give a preference to one party in the struggle, over another."

Obviously, the official stand was for neutrality. But how reconcile that with the tone and temper of most of the books and pamphlets? How reconcile that official statement with the obvious one-sided nature of the alleged "news" printed by the paper, how reconcile it with the chorus of villification and sweeping condemnation of Germany and all her deeds that thundered through the entire press of the country? Paul wondered just what his fellow Americans understood by "neutrality."

And his wonder grew as a more sinister phase of the matter forced itself on his attention. Early in the war, Great Britain and her Allies had succeeded in cutting off the Central Powers from sources of supplies of foodstuffs and necessary raw material for clothing the civilian population;

an embargo, a blockade that was not a blockade, various subtle measures masquerading under the guise of commercial enterprises had at length succeeded in closing absolutely to American manufacturers and exporters their formerly profitable market in Germany. This was largely the work of England, on whom protests, objections and pleas had no other effect than a perfectly polite and completely evasive acknowledgment. For Great Britain knew a better way to silence objections than by disagreeable even if futile discussion. To American manufacturers that country, which Napoleon had hailed as "perfidious Albion," offered special inducements and great pecuniary profit if—*they would manufacture arms and ammunition for her.*

Concerns already engaged in the manufacture of arms and ammunition for home consumption—for the use of the government and for sportsmen—were induced to accept large orders. In several instances they had to increase the size of their plants many times to meet the demands of this business.

Then, too, many new concerns sprang up in different parts of the country to engage in the same business of supplying the Allies with arms and ammunition. In numerous instances, through the tempting influence of foreign gold, industries already engaged in peaceful pursuits, in the manufacture of the tools and implements used in the arts of peace, converted their concerns into arsenals for the production of guns, shrapnel shells, and other death dealing devices, to be used on the side of the Allies.

The result was that after several months of warfare, all over this great neutral nation there existed numerous concerns engaged in producing the implements and devices that counted their victims by the hundreds of thousands, and that had already killed, wounded and maimed an appalling number. The resources of this great neutral nation were thrown, more and more, into the scale of battle on the side of the Allied Powers, and against the Austrians and Germans. Whatever might have been the international practices in the past, concerning the rights of individuals in a declared neutral nation to sell arms and ammunition to belligerents, the cause of the United States in the present war presented a situation unparalleled and unprecedented in history. In at least four particulars was the situation new—in extensively enlarging existing plants in order to furnish the demands of the belligerents; the creation of numerous concerns expressly to supply the demand; the conversion of peaceful industries to the same ends; the consequent excessive production of such commodites beyond the usual and ordinary practices of a peaceful nation.

For in modern warfare the methods of fighting and the requirements of equipment are radically changed from even a few years ago. To-day, one or two men with a modern machine gun, strategically placed, and with sufficient ammunition, are oftentimes equal to a hundred men more ordinarily equipped. To-day a few powerful shells may decimate whole regiments. The relative importance of arms and ammunition, therefore, has assumed much greater proportions in this war than in any previous conflict, so that a large nation not directly engaged in the conflict and claiming to be neutral, by contributing to one side in the conflict, can eventually come to the determining factor of the war and thus be anything but neutral in truth and in fact.

Consulting the dictionaries, available at the time, he discovered that a neutral is defined by eminent lexicographers as follows:

> Not siding with any part in a dispute; not interested one way or the other. A person or nation that takes no part in a contest between others; indifferent; inactive.

The essence of neutrality, then, is to assume the part of disinterestedness; to stand by and take no hand in the conflict, for it is not our fight. To Paul this logic seemed unanswerable. For if the unlimited furnishing of arms and ammunition to belligerents, and the straining of our resources to that end—and especially when thrown to only one side in the fight—is not a violation of our declared neutrality, then the term "neutrality" does not mean neutrality in so many words, in reality we mean that we will take a hand in the game of war, we will participate on both sides, or if circumstances so shape themselves we will participate on the one side only, and to the extent and the amount that we may desire, although we will not furnish men and a few other accessories.

International law, while comparatively a new science, like all other legal systems is susceptible to growth; and that growth consists in applying proper principles, already discovered, to meet ever changing conditions. If the principle previously applied is not a sound one, it would not be the part of wisdom for a nation in applying that principle to present changed conditions to enlarge its scope. The better practice would be to curb rather than to enlarge, and eventually to eliminate the unsound, and substitute the sound.

Assuming, therefore, that the practice of neutral nations furnishing belligerents with arms and ammunition is unsound in principle, reasoned Paul, and assuming also that the neutral nations have in the past furnished arms and ammunition to belligerents in limited quantities from their stores then existing and from their factories then producing such goods, it would be indeed the height of folly for a neutral nation to intensify its productive capacity along that line. To turn peaceful industries into the production of war materials, to divert large numbers of citizens from their pursuits of the art of peace, and engage them in the immoral and inhuman practice of contributing to the death and destruction of peoples with whom we have no differences but who are actually intimately related by ties of blood and friendship—all this he considered fundamentally wrong.

If, however, Germany and her allies ought to be defeated—if their cause is unworthy, and Americans believe that it is absolutely necessary for them to hamper and embarrass their efforts, in that case we may be justified in killing, wounding and maiming them by means of the Allies' soldiers and American arms and bullets. In that case the honorable practice would be to openly declare war upon them, and thus remove the odium that is bound to attach to us if we allow present conditions to continue under the guise of non-intervention or neutrality.

To Paul this stood out as an unquestionable fact: Under a declaration of war we need not, necessarily, recruit large armies and send them to the European battlefield. We need not even send our navies—the allies have more men and more warships now than they can effectively use. But our greatest contribution to the defeat of Germany and Austria and those associated with them would be to husband more diligently than ever our resources in order to produce those death dealing instruments and devices, and to convert more and more peaceful industries to that end so that we may abundantly supply the armies already in the field.

In this way we would be able to contribute more than our share to the conflict, and history would accord us the honors—as the future impartial historian will unquestionably give us at least honorable mention for the prominent part we have already taken in the fight.

And thus we should not be called upon to spill our own blood. By the employment of our citizens in the manufacture of munitions—say, to the extent of five hundred thousand—we should, in the net result, contribute to the death of more Germans and Austrians than if we should recruit and equip an army of several million soldiers, and place them upon the battlefield.

That the furnishing of arms and ammunition to belligerents is wrong in principle and is an immoral and a demoralizing practice, Paul had no doubt. As a man, and as a lawyer familiar with legal principles, he knew that there was no justification for it, measured by the standards of humanity, by the standards of ethics, by the practices and principles of Christianity, or the tenets set forth on those tablets of stone, on which was writ, " Thou shalt not kill."

As a lawyer, Paul knew that in every state of the Union, the taking of human life (except in self-defense) was visited with the heaviest penalties of the law. He knew that if a human life is taken, except in self-defense, that such life must be taken by the state itself, under the forms of law and after a judicial determination in the courts. Furthermore, he knew that in many of the states, the taking of human life even by the state in any manner or for any reason is absolutely prohibited; and thus such states have purged themselves of the responsibility by abolishing capitol punishment.

He was also aware that under the laws of all states to knowingly contribute in any manner to the death of a human being, either directly or indirectly, except in self-defense, is a plain violation of the law; that even an indirect participation made the participant equally guilty with the party who directly caused the death; and that under the law it is immaterial where the victim was located at the time such life was taken, whether in his own state, or any other state, or in a foreign country. Residence or citizenship of the victim does not alter the situation; it is termed murder and punished accordingly.

And as Paul thought over these matters he devised a hypothetical case. Suppose, he argued, that before the war, a citizen of England, residing in England, should write a letter to a citizen or resident in North Dakota, to this effect:

> "There are several Germans, residing in Germany, whose lives I desire to take, since I believe their actions in hampering my pecuniary interests warrant the ending of their existence. I am writing you to furnish me the implements with which to do the job, and I will pay you well for it. Under separate cover I am sending you one hundred dollars in gold to apply as part payment."

The citizen and resident of North Dakota, in compliance with the request contained in the letter, immediately devises an instrument or instruments of death, and forwards them to the purchaser at his address in England. He writes the Englishman a letter which, in part, reads as follows:

> "In compliance with your request I have forwarded to you to-day instruments that will undoubtedly achieve the results you are looking for. The material is very high in tensile strength and very special. If fragments of these instruments upon exploding strike the victim they may inflict but slight ostensible bodily harm. However, in exploding, deadly acids are developed and the tiniest fragment therefore will cause the victim's death in terrible agony within

> four hours. I may add that there is no known antidote that will counteract this poison."

The resident and citizen of England receives the implements of death in due time, and proceeds to Germany where he finds his intended victims, and then and there destroys their lives with the instruments which his American manufacturer has so clearly described.

Query: Has the resident and citizen of North Dakota, by his part in the affair, broken any law of North Dakota?

The answer is, YES.

He has, clearly and plainly, under the laws of North Dakota, committed the crime of murder, and an information would lie against him in any of the courts of the state, and he could be prosecuted in that State and by that State for such crime.

It may be contended, reasoned Paul further, that in case of war international law modifies the laws of the neutral state as to murder so that its citizens can participate in the taking of human life abroad and regard it as merely a matter of business. But whether or not international law does, in such instances, suspend the statutes concerning manslaughter, Paul concluded that the moral principle involved could not be changed in the mere fact that the citizens of Germany and the citizens of England were engaged in a fight. He brushed aside the contention as of no moral or ethical support, by which it is asserted that as a sound national policy, we should permit our citizens to furnish munitions of war to belligerents for the alleged reasons that sometime in the future we may be engaged in war, and may want citizens of other neutral countries to furnish us with similar supplies. The reasoning seemed to him absurd that if we prohibited our citizens from so furnishing munitions, it would necessitate the establishment of great military industries beforehand, and thus burden our people with militarism. Without entering into details as to the practical application of this far-fetched theory, Paul went to the basis of it to find that it is an attempt to predicate a supposed national virtue upon a private moral wrong; and a public policy so based, cannot and must not stand. He was satisfied that the continuance of such practices was demoralizing the people themselves. There are numerous institutions scattered all over the country, making the things with which to kill Germans, and that will kill Germans just as surely as the day follows the night, produced consciously by the makers for that express purpose. Everybody knows these facts. Does it demoralize? Yes, it cheapens human life; it dissipates our boasted ideals of brotherhood; it brutalizes the human instincts; it is a dangerous ideal for a nation—it is no ideal at all, since it sets materialism, money, above all else.

As Paul had arrived at these conclusions, he reached for a well known and influential technical magazine lying on the floor, and turned to the advertisement of an American concern engaged in the making of machines for the production of shells. The advertisers took particular pains to inform all possible purchasers, the public, and all other interested parties, that the shells which their machines produce, "are now being used so extensively in the war to replace the common shrapnel." He read it again and again, and he wondered; this is what he read:

> * "The material is very high in tensile strength and VERY SPECIAL and has a tendency to fracture into small pieces upon the explosion of the shell. The timing of the fuse for this shell is similar to the shrapnel shell, but it differs in that two explosive acids are used to explode the shell in the large cavity. The combination of these two acids causes a terrific explosion, having more power than anything of its kind yet used. Fragments become coated with these acids in exploding and wounds caused by them mean death in terrible agony within four hours, if not attended to immediately.
>
> From what we are able to learn of conditions in the trenches, it is not possible to get medical assistance to anyone in time to prevent fatal results. It is necessary to immediately cauterize the wound if in the

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These sentences appeared, word for word, as a part of an advertisement in an issue of a leading American technical journal.

> body or head, or to amputate if in the limbs, as there seems to be no antidote that will counteract the poison.
>
> It can be seen from this that this shell is more effective than the regular shrapnel, since the wounds caused by shrapnel balls and fragments in the muscles are not as dangerous, as they have no poisonous element making prompt attention necessary."

Paul dropped the magazine to the floor and buried his face in his hands. He saw the picture fully developed, of which the advertisement was the negative—myriads of men with unfamiliar faces, tossing and rolling upon the ground, until " death in terrible agony within four hours " had relieved them of their miseries.

But his reflections were suddenly interrupted by a return of his two traveling companions, and together they repaired to the bungalow dining-room for lunch.

CHAPTER X

A BATTLE ON THE WESTERN FRONT

IT was the day of a great battle on the western front. For two days previous the weather conditions had been such that the fleets of aeroplanes of the contending armies could not successfully navigate the air. The eyes of the armies, they call them, those aeroplanes and war balloons. Without their assistance, the movements of the opposing forces could not be determined. With them, there can be no great military surprises in the bringing up of men and materials to the front.

The Allies, therefore, had taken advantage of the unfavorable weather for flying, and, unknown to the Germans, were able to concentrate great forces of men and hundreds of pieces of artillery —both large and small—in order to storm a comparatively small section of the battle front. By so collectively utilizing their guns and men, the Allies believed they would be able to successfully pierce the enemy's lines of trenches, and then split the opposing army.

Furthermore, the Allies had just received from the United States great consignments of arms and ammunition and other supplies. They were well aware of the boasted superiority and death-dealing qualities of such products, as set forth by the American manufacturers from whom they had received these products, and as their task was one which demanded the greatest possible destructiveness, it was with considerable satisfaction that they apportioned to the mighty guns the shot and shell created by American ingenuity and skill. There was solid shot; there were shrapnel shells; there were those charged with the deadly lyddite, and those laden with that fearful, agonizing, slow-but-sure life-destroying element, picric acid.

The first gray streaks of early morning were faint in the eastern heavens, when suddenly, at a given signal, hundreds of guns of all descriptions, covering the area of battle, belched forth their deadly charges. Fires leaped from their bellowing mouths in tongues of flame that lighted up the early dawn with a glow that was both ghastly and sickening. The earth rocked and trembled with the force of terrific explosions, and the air was rent with sounds too deafening for human ears to intelligently interpret. The percussions of the explosive charges of the mighty guns swept from their feet the gunners themselves, with each periodic impulse.

It was an earthquake; it was a holocaust; it was death. The great shells, whining in their headlong rush to reach the prey, fell into the trenches of the Germans, and bursting with terrific roar, decimated their ranks into mangled bleeding corpses, or buried them alive under tons of loosened debris.

The mighty guns raked the enemy's trenches for nearly three hours. Then the fires ceased, and in the lull, the troops of the Allied powers charged the trenches fiercely. But they met stubborn resistance, and their lines wavered and fell back. Again the hellish fire of the guns broke loose with renewed vigor. Then a lull. Another charge, and again—and again.

Although the Allies did not penetrate the lines of the enemy, with much cost they had at least gained ground and succeeded in capturing several hundred yards of German trenches. Fifteen thousand Germans paid the penalty of resistance with their lives. The great American shells had done their deadly work. It was 'American Day' on the European battlefield, and the prowess of her genius and skill had been successfully demonstrated. The American manufacturers of arms and ammunition had had their innings, and their boasts and claims of superiority were literally fulfilled and everywhere manifest.

As the sun rose higher in the heavens, and the din of battle ceased, what a sight was revealed! Had these American manufacturers been so fortunate as to hover over this battle-stricken area in some balloon and gaze upon the scene, they would have been able to return home and testify, as eye witnesses, to the effective qualities of their products which, until they actually saw them, were but theory and speculation and advertisement. For there would have been revealed to them the corpses of men strewn thickly upon the field in tangled masses of maimed and twisted and dying humanity, like a fated forest mown down before the tempest's wrath. Had they descended nearer, they could have seen and heard the individual elements of that battlefield. For there were men with one arm or one leg gone. Men with no arms or legs, still living, still conscious, still thinking of home and loved ones. Men with bodies broken and bent beyond recognition, still breathing, still suffering. Men praying to the God who made them in His own image, and asking Him to receive their souls and render fatherly care over the loved ones back in the little home. Men with ghastly faces and protruding tongues, with the tortures of thirst upon them, and never a drop to quench it. Men tearing the great and gaping wounds in their flesh and biting the corpses at their sides, like beasts lashing in insane fury and agonies of torture. All were waiting for the end, for they knew that no relief could come to them between the firing lines—at least not until dark—and the sun was not yet high in the heavens. Perhaps the cover of darkness, even, cannot bring them help. And some few at least, of these poor stricken souls, must lie there for days and nights, with parched throats, with bleared visions, and suffering anguish of body and of mind that human language is impotent to describe.

With such perspective, the American manufacturers could have returned home, indelibly impressed with the scene of a European battlefield, and fully conscious of the significant part they play in the game of war.

The great battlefield had a local setting. Paul's cousin Carl, the distinguished professor, and the professor's two brothers, Helmer and Emil, were in the trenches on the German side, and when the battle began they were together.

Almost at the beginning, a huge shell dropped into their trench, and exploded with terrific force. The professor was blown several feet down the trench, and a little high up, and landed in a sort of crater formed by a previous explosion. The concussion had loosened great quantities of the concrete and earth that formed the side of the trench. This mass toppled over, crushing Emil to the cement floor and covering his lower limbs and body with this debris. He fell with his face downward, and there he lay with the great weight bearing down on his lower limbs and body. The remainder of the mass over him had so fallen that it sustained itself and did not interfere with his breathing.

Emil knew that his lower limbs were shattered, but he believed that with several hours of painful effort, as his hands and arms had sustained but slight injury, he would be able to extricate himself, even without assistance.

When the awful explosion came, Helmer was more fortunate. The falling mass of earth and concrete just grazed him. He immediately leaped upon the fallen wall, ready to offer assistance to his imprisoned brother. He did not see that another portion of the wall was in the process of toppling over, and did not suspect it until it was too late to save himself; he turned and saw it just as the masonry and earth came crashing down, and he, too, was caught like a rat in a trap, and forced flat upon his back, with tons upon his limbs, and with both arms broken and useless.

The two brothers, Emil and Helmer, were only a few feet apart, Emil in the bottom of the trench, and Helmer higher up—but by turning their heads they could see each other, and could converse.

"I will dig myself out, eventually, and come to your rescue," Emil said to Helmer, " for it appears Carl is in worse condition than either of us." And all they could see of the professor was a portion of his lower limbs protruding from the crater, and entirely motionless.

But the battle still raged, and an unlooked for element entered. At the point where Emil lay, a lateral trench also converged. He noticed a small crimson stream strike down over a low ledge in the bottom of the trench, about three feet distant, and come toward him, and as he watched it, it grew wider and larger. His suspicions were aroused—he turned his head and saw, not far away, an obstruction in the opposite direction from the ledge and this obstruction was in the bottom of the trench, formed by the debris of falling wall. Slowly the horrible fact dawned upon him—he was lying in a small basin.

The main trench and the lateral one continued to receive their masses of human bodies as the tides of battle surged.

Those warm human hearts—now stilled—as a last act in the awful drama, poured out their life's blood in streams that ran down and along the excavated defenses like water.

Has ever man faced such horror? Has ever man died so ghastly, so lewdly loathsome a death?

The professor was recovering from the shock of the explosion and was laboriously crawling toward his brother who was on the ledge, when a piece of shell struck him in the thigh and imbedded itself in his flesh. He could feel it there, jagged and hard, but could not remove it.

"But it is not a vital spot," he said to Helmer. "I'll rest here a while until I regain my strength, and then I'll dig you out and dress your wounds —mine is only a flesh wound—just a trivial injury, not dangerous in the least. It is necessary that we help ourselves, as the battle is spent, and if I figure correctly this trench is abandoned and is between the opposing lines. No relief can come to us. But if we can dig you out, and we're able to navigate, we may crawl back to our lines to-night, under cover of darkness. I'll bind you to me, if necessary, and together we'll make the journey. It cannot be far."

But he had reckoned wrongly. True, his injury was but a flesh wound, and ordinarily would have been comparatively trivial, but the jagged piece of steel contained on its surface premeditated infection, and within four hours—yes, within two—the great professor floundered and fought and rolled upon the ground, dying in terrible agony.

Not so fortunate, even, was his brother Helmer. He was pinned down firmly, so that he lay upon his back. He could turn his head and twist his body—that was all.

The day wore on, the sun rose to its zenith, and then fell slowly down the other side of the heavens. His throat was parched and his limbs were red hot with pain. At last the sun disappeared from sight, and the night came on, chilly but bright, and as the stars shone down he hoped and hoped that relief would come. At last he could bear it no longer and he called as loudly as he could, "Help! Help!" But to his appeals, there came no answer. At intervals—first on one side and then on the other—fierce rockets shot into the heavens, where they swung for several minutes, illuminating the surroundings so that the contending lines should watch each other.

Helmer forgot even his pain and suffering. He lay there gazing upward, and as the moon rose and looked down coldly, he could not tell whether it was smiling or whether it was frowning. Or was it a "pitying glance?"

As he lay there, waiting, praying, hoping—he mentally reviewed again and again the course of his life. His mind wandered from the battlefield to his old gray-haired father at home, in his arm-chair, and his dear old mother sitting by his side. He thought of that dear sister, Bertha, kind and beautiful and talented, and he wondered and dreaded the awful shock that must come to them when the truth would be revealed —Carl and Emil gone—and Helmer, too, did something whisper?

His thoughts turned to the little girl with golden curls, whose vow was still fresh upon her lips; and he remembered how she had clung to him just before he left for the front, with tears streaming down her cheeks, fearful, yet hopeful. She had said:

"Oh Helmer, you will come back, you must! We will be so happy in our little home that has just been made ready, and I shall add to its beauty each day while you are gone, and think of you each moment. You will come back, won't you, Helmer? Won't you, dear?"

He remembered her likeness in his pocket, next to his heart. He had looked at it affectionately, many times each day. Struggling with his broken arms he finally succeeded in drawing the picture from its accustomed place. And as he gazed at it his eyes filled with tears, and he attempted to swallow a lump in his throat. He could not do so.

And thus he lay, and suffered. The morn succeeded the night, and another day and another night came, and as the moon rose over the fated field on the third night, the upturned gaze of those staring eyes were no longer seeking the moon's smiles and frowns, for human endurance had reached its end. They sought earthly things no more.

CHAPTER XI

AN IMMORAL CONVERSION

WHEN Paul returned to his home, he was quite browned, and a physical specimen of glowing health. He had forgotten, to a certain extent, his experience across the waters, and was trying more and more to really dismiss it from his mind. He held that he had fought a losing battle, and he hoped that time would eventually heal his wounds. But the scars were there, and too often a dull throbbing heartache made him wretched.

Paul found everything at the farm in fine condition, or, as old Silas expressed it, "in apple-pie order." The old foreman and his wife Aunt Sarah—as Paul always affectionately called her—were overjoyed to see him again, and showed their happiness in every possible way.

"I had the calf all ready for you, once, you Europeyan prodigil," old Silas said, as he took Paul's hand. "But you didn't come home when you wrote you would, last fall, and I was a standin' in the road one evenin' a lookin' for you, just like the scripture father, when I seed a feller comin' down the road a limpin' along with a cane, and I sez to myself, 'That's the prodigil, all right, it's Paul. He's staid in Europe too long, and got hit by one o' them big centymeters.' But it wasn't you at all. It was young Birch, the one that has a lame foot and he brought your telegram over statin' thet you'd changed your mind and was a goin' to South Ameriky. Well, Sary an' me wuz so disappointed that we sold the calf so you'll hev to git along jest the best you kin. But I'll admit ye don't look like ye ben livin' on husks."

Paul occupied his time for several days looking over his property, and familiarizing himself with conditions. He decided, however, that he would spend the week-end in Indianapolis and motored down the next morning. He called at the office of his father's old friend and lawyer, John Morris, but the clerk informed him that he was out of the city and would not return for several days.

He then went to the plant of the Central Plow Works Company, to visit the manager, Verne Woodruff, and to go over the business affairs of the concern with him. He found the manager in the office. Woodruff greeted Paul warmly and was full of curiosity as to his adventures in Europe. Finally, in a pause, Paul asked casually: "How's business?"

"Fine and dandy!" replied Woodruff, bringing his hand down on the arm of his chair. "If business keeps on as it has lately, we shall actually clear a hundred per cent, probably a hundred and fifty, or even more. That is better than ten or fifteen, isn't it? The best we ever made, before, was twenty. I wish your father were here now, he'd have more confidence in me as a manager. We had considerable difficulty in getting your father interested, and he was pretty shaky about it, as an investment, for a long time, and it really was a great sacrifice on his part. He embarrassed himself financially for a time—even sold land to rescue us from impending bankruptcy. But he saved our bacon, and that bacon is worth some money, now, believe me. Do you know, our stock is quoted at seven times the figure it was a year ago?"

Verne Woodruff's enthusiasm engendered a grave suspicion in Paul.

"Have the agricultural interests so largely increased, that there is such an excessive demand for our plows and cultivators?" he asked in surprise.

"Plows and cultivators!" said Woodruff with amused amazement. "Plows and cultivators!" he repeated. "Why, haven't you heard?"

"How could I hear," replied Paul. "I received no information from America, even before I left Germany."

"Come with me," said Woodruff, rising suddenly from his chair, and manifesting a degree of exhilaration; "I'll show you what we've got here."

He led the way to the warehouse where the farm implements were usually kept ready for shipment. There was not a plow or cultivator in sight, but instead Paul noticed many large and strongly built boxes labeled, "Explosives, Handle with Care."

A sickening sensation came over Paul as the truth dawned upon him. But he did not disclose his feelings to Woodruff. The latter conducted him into the work-shops, and he saw them turning out shrapnel and other shells of various kinds and descriptions, and in all stages of development, from the cold steel ingots to the finished product, ready to be placed in the artillery guns and fired.

"You see," continued Woodruff, "We have torn down the old shed to the north, and erected a wing almost as large as the factory proper. We needed the room. We are making the finished product—that is quite a distinction, as many plants only make parts. Of course, we purchase some of the smaller parts, and the explosives that go into them, but we have a finished article that cannot be excelled." Woodruff rubbed his hands in great satisfaction.

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They had gone over nearly the whole of the plant, when one of the workmen called Woodruff aside for a brief conversation. In the meantime Paul stepped into what appeared to be a small ware-room. There were a number of large vessels, like demijohns, enclosed in double wicker, carefully arranged along the walls. The vessels contained a peculiar liquid, and he had just removed the top cap from one of them as Woodruff came into the room.

"What is this?" said Paul, as he inserted his finger into the neck of the vessel and down toward the liquid, which he could not quite touch.

"Don't! Don't!" called Woodruff, hurrying to him and grasping his hand. "That is a deadly poison! Why, if you had touched that with your finger, and there were a cut or an abrasion on it, we would have had to amputate your finger, or at least cauterize it, to save your life. It is a deadly poison, there is no antidote for it. But it helps to make a shell of quality," he added with a note of pride in his voice.

Paul followed Woodruff to the office, sick at heart.

"How long have you been engaged in making shells?" he asked, as they reached the office door.

"Oh, for several months," responded the manager. "You see, we got into the game early. I was in New York a short time after the war broke out, visiting a friend of mine. While there, a relative of his farm abroad called on him. This man was interested in ammunition, and he gave me a tip. It looked good, and I got busy at once. Took a little while to make the change, but she's a hummer, now, and if the war will just continue long enough, you and I can retire after it is over with our pile made. We can go to Europe, too, and spend some of their own gold, and even tell them what fools they were anyway, to shoot each other to pieces. It's none of our business what they do. If they've got the money we have the goods for them." He paused to let this bit of business philosophy sink into Paul. Then he continued:

"Of course, we are only furnishing our product to one side. That is part of our contract, and I believe that it is the contract of practically every other manufacturer of arms and ammunition in the country. There is only one side to buy, and that may account for it, but if the other side were even able to make shipment, I doubt whether they could scare up a single concern now in existence in the country not already bound by contract, to furnish or supply them.

"What will we do with the factory when the war is over, will we make plows again?" asked Paul.

"That depends," replied Woodruff. "When

we believe the war is over, we might unload the whole thing on the public at its present stock value, and make a neat fortune. Or we might accomplish the same result by watering our stock, and still retain a controlling interest; we can always find some excuse for a new stock issue, additions to be built, equipment to be installed. We won't need either, I believe myself, but if we can work the matter in that way, we ought to retain a controlling interest, and it may not be necessary to re-convert the factory into a plow concern. The arms and ammunition business is not going to cease by any means at the termination of this war. I have been studying the question considerably since I became interested.

"Let me give you a tip," and he smiled. "The armor-plate, arms and ammunition people are already organized. You didn't know that? True, many of the smaller plants will go out of existence when peace is declared. But remember this," he said emphatically, "there will be more plants, and larger and more aggressive ones after this war is over than there were in the country before hostilities were declared. I need not disclose the course of my information—but I know what I am talking about. This country is going to be committed to a policy of great armament and preparation, just like Europe. There is much opposition to the plan at present. These peace propagandists are spouting freely, but we'll put a damper on them. We have interested the money trust at last, and they will conduct a campaign of education that will be effective. Much of the press, even the clergy to a great extent, will fall into line. And the school children will be shouting the nice defense phrases that we will coin for them. We will create a patriotism for armament and defense that will back the European nations off the boards."

"But who are we going to get ready to fight?" asked Paul.

"Now don't start something," said Woodruff amusedly. "I discover that your mind is working along just the same lines as all other peace exhorters. You don't belong to that crowd any more, now, you are an ammunition maker, and peace, real peace, would ruin our business. I confess that I do not know just whom we are going to fight. It is plain the European nations will have enough when they get through to last them a long, long time. They will be so financially hampered that they couldn't finance a war if they wanted to, the peoples' burdens will be so great. You can't pull off these things too often—the people will see through it. When the European nations get ready to fight again—if they ever do—it will be many years hence, and all our armaments and equipments that we shall provide ourselves with, for many years to come, will be obsolete. That is not for publication. I confess the apparent prostrated condition of Europe after the war is the greatest obstacle to overcome in our plan of armament education. But we have the Japanese bugaboo left, and we'll work it overtime. We must protect the Monroe Doctrine, too, see? It's a good argument."

"You do not look well, Paul," he broke off. "I noticed that you were pale when I saved you from that acid, but I didn't mean to scare you. Really, it might have been serious if you had touched it."

Paul was truly sick at heart, but white with rage. He thought nothing of his escape from the acid, he was greatly disturbed when he thought of the consequences of those shells, and the human beings, their future victims. He was angry because of Woodruff's callousness and total disregard of humanity, his converting a plow factory into an arms factory to help in the killing and maiming of human beings. And all for British gold.

However, Paul did not reveal his state of feeling. It was so overwhelming that he was dazed. He wanted to think about it, but it was difficult for him to keep down his emotions. In his heart he wanted to thrash Woodruff—thrash him within an inch of his life.

"I am really not feeling well, and I must go," he said.

"Shall I call a cab?"

"No. My car is not far distant, I can walk to it. I will feel better when I get out in the air."

"By the way," said Woodruff, as Paul was at the door, "the gentleman from abroad, whom I met in New York, as I told you, will be here to negotiate a new ammunition contract with the firm. Our present one will be filled in a month or so. He is a capital fellow, and I want you to meet him. He never dickers on prices—rather think I'll ask a little advance, this time. He informed me that the tests of our shells prove there are none better made. Our reputation is fixed and we'll make him pay for it. We'll clear that hundred and fifty per cent yet," and he slapped Paul on the shoulder, gleefully.

"If he comes while you are out of the city," continued Woodruff, "I shall wire you, or send you word in some manner, as you must meet him."

"Very well, I shall be on hand," replied Paul as he departed.

CHAPTER XII

"THEM DUCKS ARE THE JARMENS"

WHEN Paul left the plow works—or arsenal, rather—he walked away briskly, for he was excited and angry. He was brought to an abrupt stop, however, at the second street corner. In turning it quickly, he collided squarely with an officer of the law, and both Paul and his victim found themselves sprawling on the pavement.

The officer, who was a big Irishman, regained his feet first, and caught Paul by the arm, just as he was rising.

"Oi arrest ye, ye scamp, for negligince! What if ye had been an ottymobille, whar would oi hav ben?" he said earnestly and hotly.

The officer's suggestion struck Paul comically, and he found himself laughing heartily in his face. This seemed to intensify the latter's wrath, and he was on the point of administering a severe castigation, when, on taking a second look, his jaw dropped and his voice took on a different tone as he said with rising inflection:

"Fur the luve of Moike, if it isn't Paul! How are ye, me boy, anyway? Glad to see you, too, indade! Fur the last oi heard uv ye, they said ye war in Jarmunny, and then whin the war broke out, an' the papurs said the Russians wuz a marchin' right through the whole Jarmun Impire, a burnin' ivverything and ivverybody—oi thought ov ye, lad—oi thought ov ye."

The speaker was old Barney Flynn, the deputy sheriff of the county, and he had been deputy sheriff ever since he was appointed the first time, many years ago. He was well known to Paul, as well as to the latter's father in his lifetime. In fact everybody in the county either was acquainted with him personally, or at least knew of him. When Paul attended school in the city, he often met Barney on the streets and chatted with him, and they were warm friends.

Barney was a long, lanky Irishman, with a fringe of red hair—shrewd, good hearted, whole souled, and quite talkative—so much so, in fact, that he reminded one of those automatic talking machines that no sooner finish one selection than they start in on another. But unlike some talking-machines, he was always "wound up."

In a conversation with Barney, unless you understood his failing, or his particular accomplishment would be perhaps the better way to put it—the discussion might last for hours, and yet you might not say a word. For if the discussion admitted of any questions to be asked on your part, Barney would ask them, himself, and answer them, too.

Barney Flynn, an efficient official, was honest and upright and conscientious in his work. It was perhaps these characteristics that saved him from many of the difficulties that most people of a talkative disposition get into.

Perhaps his popularity was due, in a measure, to the fact that he himself had, on a number of occasions, advanced to a poor judgment debtor the money with which to satisfy an execution, and took only the latter's note for the money loaned. And then it had leaked out that on one occasion he saved the widow Barlow two valuable cows on which she and her babies were dependent from a foreclosure brought by an unscrupulous lender. And, further, rumor had it, he had protected the loveliest girl in the neighborhood from an unhappy fate by preventing her elopement with a profligate from an adjoining state.

As to whether or not all these stories—and many others—were true, could not be verified by Barney, for he was resolutely silent. But every one knew that if the stories were not all true, that such things would have happened had the circumstances arisen, and had Barney been on hand. And so it did not matter who was elected sheriff, whether Democrat or Republican, it seemed to be an unwritten law with the people, as well as with the officials armed with such appointive power, that Barney Flynn should continue in office.

Paul apologized for the inconvenience he had caused him, and his offer of amends was accepted in good grace. Then Barney said solemnly:

"Hev ye ben down to the plow worrks since ye rethurned?" He looked at Paul's face searchingly.

"Yes," replied Paul, "I was just coming from there when I ran over you. I was somewhat excited as to what I saw at the works and I didn't notice where I was going."

"Excoited, war ye?" exclaimed Barney. He took a long breath. "It's 'nough to excoite innyone—a thurnin' a notice plow factory that makes the tools to raise the crops so people kin live, into an institushion to make things what blow people off the face iv thu earth. It's a shame, oi tell ye, it's a shame! Oh, if yer dad war here! There'd be somethin' a doin', mind that oi tell ye. It's 'nough to make him thurn ovver in his graive—thu good harrd earned munny he put into thu worrks to save it from thu wall, and now they've remimbered his koindness, if ye plase, by a thurnin' it into a divvel's workshop to make hell fer thus Jarmuns."

Barney was started and he paused not.

"And Oi wudn't hev a worrd to say, if we hed ennything agin th' Jarmuns, but we haven't, not a thing. Oi take it they're fairly dacent sort ov people over there—onorable and respictible like yer own father—and what do we want to kill thim fur annyway?"

By this time Barney was getting very much in earnest, and many of the passersby had stopped to hear him, but the deputy-sheriff was oblivious of their presence.

"It makes me tyred to hear sum ov thim fellers a thryin' to justify this immoral ammynishun bizness. And it's all wrong, don't ye think? Of coors ye do. Well, now ye know old Higgins? To be sure ye know him, he lived in yer nayborhud menny years. Do ye know, Oi wuz out to his place a huntin' ducks, sometime ago, an' we got to argyin' about the ammynishun question, Higgens an' me. And Oi sez to him, 'hit's all wrong to help kill off even a Jarmun,' but Higgens, ye know, he was a holdin' up the bizness —that we didn't hev to know what they did with it, and that we couldn't know whether it ivver hurrt ennybody, and that 'we're not morruly responsibul, fer hit's jest bizness with us.'

"Well, ye know, Oi wuz jest a wadin' in thu wather to git a noice shot at thim ducks a settin' there on the ither soide ov thu grass, when all uv a suddin Oi shtepped in a hole, an' belave me, Oi wint clain undher, and Oi losht me gun an' Oi losht me ammynishun—and old Higgens a settin' on thu bank as unconsarned as if nothin' hed happened at all. Foinally Oi crawled out and I called to him, 'Higgens, let's git thim duck!' And he sez, 'Alright, why don't ye git thim?'

"And Oi sez, 'Oi've losht me gun an' me ammynishun and Oi can't.'

"And he says, 'Jist wait Barney till Oi come back.'

"And do ye know, he run all thu way to thu house, an' all the way back—spryer'n he wuz forthy years ago. An' whin he got back he handed me thu gun an' the ammynishun, an' he sez, 'Barney, me oi-sight is poor, Oi 've done me part, Oi 've furnished thu gun an thu ammynishun, it's up to ye to do thu resht.'

"An Oi took thu gun and thu ammynishun, an' Oi sez, 'Higgens, it's thim ducks on the ither soide ov thu grass that Oi wanted to kill.' And he sez, 'Oi know it, why don't ye kill thim?' And then Oi sez, 'Higgens, Oi wanted thu gun an' ammynishun to kill thim ducks with, ye knowed that, didn't ye?' And he said, 'If co'rs Oi do, ye fule, shoot 'em er they'll fly away.'

"Ye know, Oi wuz jest a shootin' his 'not morrully responsibul' argyments before Oi shot the ducks, but he didn't know it. Then Oi blazed away at thim ducks an' Oi got ivvery one ov thim.

Well, there wuz eight as noice a duck ye ivver saw, a layin' there on the wather, kilt. Finelly ole Higgens he sez, 'Barney, how menny ov thim ducks air ye intitled to, fer shootin' thim?'

"And Oi wanted to divvel him a bit, so Oi sez, 'Why, all ov thim, ov co'ors, didn't Oi shoot thim?'

"An' thin to me astonishment, old Higgens he fired right up—got real mad, an' he sez, 'Barney, ye're intirely onrasonable in this matther. Ye know Oi did more to git thim ducks thin ye did, fer didn't Oi furnish all the ammynishun an' the gun. An' could ye hev got thim without thu ammynishun an' the gun?'

"An' Oi sez, 'Higgens, Oi can't see where ye air morruly responsibul.'

"An' he sez, 'Oi'm more responsibul then ye air, Barney, fer Oi did the most toward gitten thim ducks.' And Oi wanted to divvel him a bit more, an' so Oi sez, 'Oi can't see hit thet way at all, Higgens.'

"An' so he got raal excoited, an' he sez, 'Barney, Oi'll prove it to ye mathematickelly. Ye know, Barney, Oi allus had to worrk yer problems fer ye at skule when we wuz bois?'

"And Oi sez, 'Guess that's roit, Higgens.'

"An' he took a stick an' made eight little marks in thu sand, an' he sez, 'Now Barney, thim's the ducks.' An' Oi sez, 'Air they?'

"An' then he make a marrk furder over an' he sez, 'An' Barney, that's you.' And Oi sez, jist to divvel him again, 'no, that ain't long 'nuf fer me, an' Oi ain't thet shallow.' And do ye know, he forgot his religion roit then an' there, an' I come purty near mixin' with him fer what he said. Foinally, he made annother marrk soide ov it, and he sez, 'An' this is me, Barney,' and Oi sez, 'It is?'

"An' he sez, 'Now we couldn't git thum dooks widout ye, Barney—we admit that—ye soited the gun an' pulled the trigger.' An' Oi sez, 'That's roite, too.'

"An' then he sez, 'Barney ye couldn't git thim ducks widout me, fer Oi fernished the gun an' ammynishun.' An' Oi sez, 'Ye did Higgens, Oi'll admit it.'

"An' he sez, 'Well there's the morrul responsibility. Ye're half to blame, Barney, an' I'm the ither half, an' consequently Oi'm intitled to half thu ducks.'

"Well, Oi had him jist where Oi wanted him, but of co'ors he didn't know it, an' Oi sez, 'Higgens do ye see thim ducks a layin' over there?'

"An' he sez, 'Of co'ors Oi do.'

"'Well,' sez Oi, 'thim ducks is the Jarmuns.' An' then Oi sez, 'Higgens do ye see me?' An' he sed, 'If co'ors Oi see ye.' An' Oi sez, 'Well, Oi'm the Allies.'

"An' would ye belave it, he tumbled roit thin an' there—wint clain through that thick skull ov his—an' he sez, kinder surprised loike, 'An Barney who—who—am Oi?'

"An' Oi sez, 'You? Why ye air thu American mannyfacturers what supplies the Allies, and Oi'll admit they're intitled to half the Jarmuns.'

"An' then ye know, fer fear he might be a sustainin' his own argyment, he refused to take enny ov thim ducks at all."

By this time quite a crowd had gathered about Barney, listening to his narrative. Paul found it necessary to leave, so he stepped close to the deputy sheriff and said, "That was a convincing argument, and there is no doubt as to their moral responsibility in this man-killing game. Something must be done in this other matter—I'm going to the country for a few days to think it over—I may need you later."

"Jist call on me, lad—jist call on me," the other replied, as the young man walked away; and a half block down, as Paul glanced around, he saw that Barney was still entertaining the crowd, and that they were laughing good naturedly.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MUNITION AGENT'S NIECE

FOR several days Paul spent his time upon his farm studying the factory situation. He had gone over the ammunition question in all its phases down at Panama, and had arrived at the conclusion that every argument put forth in its defense could not stand the test of reason.

The difficult question, therefore, for him to determine, was not as to the merits or demerits of the traffic, but as to how to stop the output. He had fully decided that drastic measures should be taken, but just where he should begin, and what to do, and how to do it, were still unknown quantities.

In early days, his father and Woodruff had worked hand in hand; and as the combined shares of stock that each held was a majority of the issue, they easily controlled the corporation and dictated its policies. Lately, however, there had been a new stock issue, and, while Paul had not investigated the matter thoroughly, he was reasonably certain that now Woodruff, his close friends and associates, had a controlling interest.

Of one thing he was certain: If the concern should not be reconverted into a peaceful industry, he would have no further connection with it, even if he had to give away his stock. He knew that he could not compromise with his conscience, and thus aid and assist in the killing of human beings against whom he had no grievance. Neither did he believe that his government should allow any of its people to do so, for human life, wherever it be found, is so sacred that it cannot be left to conscience, alone, but must—so far as possible—receive the protection of organized societies. True, he reasoned, organized societies in Europe are, at present, very careless of human life; but we must remember that Europe has gone mad. But, is it our duty to furnish the implements to mad Europe with which to exterminate her people?

The presumption is that we are not afflicted with such mania, ourselves, and yet the circumstances would be more extenuating if we were. For it is a well settled principle of law that provocation—madness—while it does not excuse, does mitigate and reduce the severity of the offense. But not so with one who deliberately plans. The individual who takes the life of a fellow man, under provocation, or in a state of frenzied madness, cannot escape the consequences of his act, but he may arouse our deepest sympathy, for in a moment of calm reason, doubtless he would not have committed the deed. But the one who deliberately plans and assists in the taking of human life, directly or indirectly, and merely for gold, has reached the lowest moral depths to which a human being can sink. It matters not whether he be a common thug, who, in the span of a lifetime, has destroyed one or two or a half dozen lives, or whether he be a gentleman, clothed in broadcloth and ensconced in luxurious apartments, with financial resources unlimited and with concentrated physical forces so completely at his command that by merely stretching forth his hand he can pluck a hundred thousand human souls from their earthly temples, and cast them before their Maker.

Paul was lying in the shade of a sycamore tree, as these things passed through his mind. He sprang to his feet and exclaimed vehemently:

"I will delay no longer! It is time to act! I'll not sell my shares of stock, neither will I give them away! I'll fight Woodruff and his henchmen to the last ditch, to my last dollar, and to the last ounce of my moral strength."

Paul decided to confer with John Morris, and go over the situation with him. Possibly he could suggest some plan of action. Accordingly, when the latter appeared at his office the next morning, he found Paul waiting for him.

Their greeting was warm, and after mutual inquiries, Paul explained his purpose in regard to the plow company. They went over the situation carefully, and decided that it would be wise to look up the stockholders in order to ascertain whether those holding a majority of the stock could be induced to favor action toward re-converting the plant into a plow factory. They realized, however, that the great returns from the present product would be a hard factor to overcome.

After considerable search into the facts and circumstances surrounding the stock issue, they concluded, as Paul had suspected, that with the new issue and sale of stock, Woodruff and his friends now held a controlling interest in the concern, and would be able to continue its present policy, unless the last stock issue was irregular. It was to be determined whether this stock issue was illegal, and a nullity. Meanwhile they planned to buy up as much of the old stock as possible, and have an understanding with as many more of the holders as could be influenced, and thus control a majority of the old stock. Then if they had a fighting chance, they would go into court and have the new shares of stock declared void and cancelled. This would put the controlling interest in the hands of Paul and his associates, and as the regular election of the board of directors would take place in a few days, there was a chance of securing an early control of the output of the factory.

It was necessary to keep these plans from Woodruff. The old stockholders would have to be approached very cautiously, for the plans once exposed, all Woodruff's shrewdness and resourcefulness would be called into opposition, and there would be little doubt as to the result.

That afternoon Paul went to the factory and found Woodruff in the office.

"Mr. Price—or Sir William Price, rather—the munition agent of whom I told you," said Woodruff, "will be here this evening to fix up the new contract. I received a telegram from him only a few moments ago, asking me to meet him at his rooms in the Tremont to-morrow where we will have luncheon, and then take up contract negotiations. I shall not be in any hurry to close the deal, unless he accedes to our demand for a higher price, for he is sure to come our way eventually, if we are at all reasonable in our contentions.

"And by the way," he continued, "Sir William informs me that he will make the Tremont his headquarters for an extended period, and will have his family with him. He has been here several times, and says he likes the town."

"Perhaps he is enamoured with your factory output, and can't keep away?" Paul replied sarcastically, but Woodruff evidently did not notice it, and took the remark as a compliment to his constructive and managing ability, and smiled complacently.

Paul presented himself at the Tremont at the proper time—Woodruff had preceded him—and was ushered into the parlor of the suite of rooms occupied by Sir William Price and his family. Woodruff rose as Paul entered, and introduced him to the gentleman.

Sir William was a man of about sixty years of age, quite bald, of stocky build, and wore glasses. He was energetic in his walk and actions; his bearing was always confident and easy. His eyes were small and deep set, and appeared to have the faculty of seeing through everything and everybody. Whether or not he came rightfully by his title of "Sir William," it did not matter particularly with him, for he used the "Sir" as a mark of distinction when he found it most convenient, and he became just plain "William Price" when the exigencies of the case demanded it. To Woodruff he was known as "Sir William," and in the mind of Woodruff, constituted as it was, the title added much to his stature and importance.

Verne Woodruff had already told Sir William that Paul was one of the heavy stockholders in the plant, and he manifested a great deal of pleasure in making his acquaintance. Sir William then took Paul by the arm, and turned him partially around as he said, "Meet my niece, Edith Price."

For a moment Paul and Miss Price faced each other, and neither spoke. Finally Paul advanced toward her, still looking her squarely in the eyes, and clasped the hand that she held out to him. Then, dropping it, he placed the tips of his fingers upon each side of her face, and drew them across, as he said in a tone of mingled surprise and delight, "Am I dreaming, or are you real?"

"Do you mean me, or the color in my cheeks," she inquired. "If you mean the latter, I must assure you that they are real American roses," she continued laughingly. He noticed that her cheeks did possess a deep color, and he thought he had not realized she was so pretty before, for she was no other than the little girl he had met in England—his prison-keeper in those other and perhaps pleasanter days.

This sudden burst of familiarity quite surprised both Woodruff and Sir William. The latter's little eyes opened wide, and he even removed his glasses that he might have an unobstructed view of Paul.

Paul knew, now, that Sir William was the husband of the "Aunt Flora" he had met in England and the uncle of his fair keeper, the man who had gone to America with "mules on his shopping list."

"Is it possible that you two have met before!" Sir William ejaculated.

"Yes," she replied, "Mr. Nehring is the gentleman whom the British Government was bent on proving a spy. I told you about it."

"Well! Well!" responded the Englishman as he took Paul's hand. "I'm mighty glad the proof wasn't forthcoming, and that my government didn't succeed. It was a narrow escape though, so they tell me. The fact of the matter is, that instead of being an enemy of the country and a hindrance, you will be a very valuable assistant to the Allies' cause. Mr. Woodruff has already informed me that you are a very heavy stockholder in the ammunition factory, and our cause has need of your plant. In this war, ammunition and guns are the important things—we have plenty of men, more than we can use—but we can never get enough ammunition. I'm glad that we can link hands with such men as you and Mr. Woodruff, so that your great resources can be at our command. Any inconvenience, Mr. Nehring, that you may have experienced while in my country, will be fully compensated, I assure you. I expect to place, to-night, with your firm, a very handsome contract, so large that it will make you stagger," he smiled, and his little eyes peered squintingly.

Paul saw clearly that this man was even more mercenary than Woodruff. He also knew that his perception was keen, and he determined to be very careful to conceal his sentiments on the ammunition question. He smiled, purposely and deliberately, and replied.

"Ammunition contracts, when literally fulfilled, eventually cause men to stagger, do they not? It is a staggering business."

Sir William smiled at the sally, but he also suspected that Paul was not greatly enthusiastic over the contract. He knew it from the forced smile, the lack of appreciation of his large contract suggestion, and the evasive reply. Paul was not an adept at concealment. Thoroughly honest and upright, concealment was almost impossible to his nature, and all his attempts along that line were quite amateurish.

As they went into an adjoining room for luncheon, Sir William and Woodruff were in the rear; the former said to his companion, in a low tone of voice, "Peculiar character—this Nehring—he does not seem to be favorably interested in the contract."

"You are wrong," replied Woodruff. "He

has been down to the factory several times since his return from abroad, and he shows great interest, even in the mechanical part of it. He has never said a word against the business."

After luncheon, at which Sir William's charming niece presided, the baronet said that he would go down to the hotel office for his papers which were in the safe, and upon his return they would discuss the contract. In the meantime Woodruff busied himself looking over some books. Paul escorted Miss Price to the piano, as he wanted to talk with her, and knew Sir William would return in a very short time. Apparently she divined his thoughts, for not a note was played. True, she occupied the bench before the instrument, and he stood by with his hand upon the music ready to assist her, but not even the cover over the keys was raised.

"You have become even prettier since you are in America," he ventured.

"And you have developed into a greater flatterer in America," she replied.

"But you did not know me as my real self, when I was in England," he smiled. "I was bound by limitations—my chain was only a few feet long. A man under those circumstances could not be fully himself."

"Then if I understand you," she retorted, "the things you told me in England were said when you were beside yourself?"

"No," he answered, "I meant every word I said, and I have no apology to make on their account." He spoke gravely and with such feeling that she answered hastily:

"But perhaps I owe you an apology for having brought up the subject—I assure you it was not my intention to hurt you in any way."

"Since you have mentioned it, however, I shall feel free to inquire as to how your friend in the army is faring?"

"Oh, Mr. Lemley, you mean? I have not seen him since he left for the front, but I have heard from him frequently. He was in several severe engagements, but came out uninjured, and has been promoted for bravery under fire."

Paul paused for a moment and then said with a half suppressed sigh: "I have hoped, many times, that the war would end speedily, if for no other reason, than for your sake, that he might be returned to you safely."

"How kind of you, Mr. DeLance—or Mr. Nehring, rather! It has been my daily prayer for many months," she answered simply.

"I see I still bear two names with you," said Paul, "and I must confess that I am glad to know that you have at least one, for the last time I met you, you appeared to be nameless!"

"And do you think my name is pretty?"

"Yes, very," he responded.

"But it is not as pretty as Gladys, that is, unless you have changed your mind?" she answered archly. "In England you told me that Gladys was the prettiest name you knew."

"I shall guard my opinion for the present," he laughed, "for I am not at all certain I know your real name even yet. It may turn out to be Cinderella or some other magic character. I remember your telling me in England that your Uncle would probably be known under an assumed name while in America; and so if his is fictitious, can one help thinking yours may be too?"

"But Shakespeare said, 'What's in a name?'" she responded glancing at him shyly.

"Yes," and in the same breath he said, 'That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.'"

"I see you have been reading Juliet."

"Yes, just as you have favored Romeo. But if I were to paraphrase it and make it fit my own case, I would say that a rose I once knew was just as lovely without any name." He smiled down at her. She met his gaze for a moment, then, while a slow flush mounted her cheeks, she began to fumble with the music before her. Just then Sir William entered the room with the documents he had been searching for. Paul mumbled a few conventional words of leave taking, though he found himself strangely disturbed, and made a vague engagement for either the next day or the next hour, he could not for the life of him tell which. Then he followed her uncle into the den where Woodruff was busily occupied.

Sir William and Woodruff discussed the ammunition contract at great length, but Paul had not a word to say. True, several questions were directed to him by Woodruff, but as Paul made no reply he assumed that his silence was assent. But not so with the ammunition agent. His little eyes occasionally glanced from Woodruff to Paul, apparently merely casually. But Sir William was a keenly observant man for all his rather bluff, stiff manner, and little escaped him. What he saw now led him to direct many of his statements towards drawing Paul out. The Englishman was measuring the American as a merchant measures his cloth.

Paul's real purpose in being present was to learn all he could about the proposed deal, and then to use the information to block it, if possible. However, as he sat there, it came over him that, vital as were the issues involved, he was not doing, perhaps, the honorable thing. He became very restless and uncomfortable. Nor did this escape Sir William.

He suddenly turned to Paul and in a somewhat abrupt fashion asked him a question in regard to the time required for the production of a certain kind of shell. Paul's mind had wandered far and he realized that the best thing for him to do was to leave. He apologized to his companions but complained that he was suffering from so severe a headache as to make it impossible for him to discuss the matter further with them. After he had gone, Woodruff said, his voice indicating a certain perplexity!

" That is the second time I have had to send him home on account of sickness! "

" Yes," responded Sir William, " there is no doubt that he is indisposed, all right, but it is a peculiar kind of sickness. The causes that produce his illness would cure you, Woodruff, if you were already on your death-bed."

" What do you mean? What would make him sick, but snatch me even from the grave? " asked the factory manager in surprise.

" Fat ammunition contracts," and Sir William broke into a hearty laugh.

" What do you mean? You don't mean to say that you think he is opposed to our manufacturing the product? " exclaimed the puzzled Woodruff.

" I am certain of it. And not only that—he will do everything in his power to frustrate the fulfillment of the contracts," answered the Englishman emphatically.

"But such a thing is impossible," exclaimed Woodruff. Why, I have known Paul for many years and while he's not a business man, in any way, yet I have always thought him possessed of good common sense. He'd be the last person in the world to fall for this peace-crank stuff!"

"You're totally and entirely mistaken," answered Sir William. "That young man is absolutely opposed to your ammunition business, Woodruff. If you had followed his conversation closely at luncheon you would have seen that the thought of making what he terms death-dealing-instruments is abhorrent to him. He is not a sentimentalist, but he has the feeling in regard to taking human life that is shared by many men, that under no circumstances and to its remotest causes, can it be justified. And he is also a man of great firmness of character and determination. He'll act."

"But how?" exclaimed the amazed Woodruff. ruff.

"I'm sure I don't know, man," answered Sir William, testily. "Only I do know he'll act and, unfortunately, he's a very honorable person and he'll act in a way you cannot block secretly. He'll fight but he'll fight in the open." Sir William paused for a moment, his little eyes fixed on Woodruff. "Tell me, Mr. Woodruff," he continued, speaking confidentially, " are you fixed to fight in the open? "

Woodruff shot a quick glance at his vis-à-vis.

" Why, of course," he answered huskily. " What do you mean? My friends and I have the controlling stock interest in the concern now, since the last stock issue, and he could do nothing. I am well aware that a great many were dissatisfied with converting the factory into ammunition works, but they are only minor holders of the stock. We will elect officers in a few days for the ensuing year, and I assure you, as we hold a majority of the shares, the whole matter is already cut and dried. Nehring can do nothing."

" There are no irregularities that he could take advantage of? " Sir William spoke slowly, his gaze never wavering.

Woodruff shifted his eyes.

" No," he began, confidently. But as the other's silence became more inquisitive, he went number of little fellows, there are bound to be some slips and omissions and I suppose we have had our share. But these things are hardly more than technicalities and I believe that our books of on, a little confusedly: " Of course, in all reorganizations, especially where you have a large record will bear the closest examination."

Sir William smiled.

"I hope they do, Mr. Woodruff," he remarked drily. "Because if I were you, I would do what your American politicians find it advisable to do, look after my fences. For Mr. Nehring is nursing an antagonism and, as I said before, he is also a man of action. Watch out for him."

Woodruff was silent for a few moments. Then he said, more to himself than to his companion.

"I guess I'll have him shadowed."

"I would if I were you, day and night," exclaimed Sir William.

Woodruff's expression became vindictive as he shook his host's hand in farewell.

"We'll put a stopper on that little fool," he sneered. "Don't worry, Sir William. I'll stop him and fulfill my contract. Good-bye."

But as the door closed on him, Sir William murmured. "You're pretty confident, my friend. A little to confident, perhaps. You'll have your work cut out for you."

CHAPTER XIV

THE FLIGHT FOR SHARES

SIR WILLIAM was no mean judge of character. Few men are, whose occupations lead them into close contact with operations frequently to be described as shady, and in the case of Paul his prophecy was justified within a few hours. Fully and finally resolved to stop a business which in every detail was revolting to his sense of humanity and abhorrent to his instinct for fair play, Nehring began the following morning to gather in all the old stock that he could find. The Central Plow Works Company had started in the early eighties and every farmer and merchant in and about Indianapolis had subscribed for as much stock as he could scrape together money. The concern was a local affair and local pride was excited. So that, as Woodruff had said, before the reorganization, the Central Plow Works Company had been largely an affair of little people. A great deal of the original stock had passed into Paul's father's hands at the time of the first reorganization, but there were many descendants of original subscribers still, and from these Paul sought to obtain stock or proxies. His plan was simple. He meant to secure control of the company as it was before the recent reorganization and then depose, through legal action, Woodruff and his associates. And he was the more heartened in his efforts by finding among many old stockholders a spirit of resentment at the turning over of the Plow Works into an ammunition factory. They did not like it. As one old farmer said:

"Mr. Nehring, it's against common sense and against right. This war's not going to last forever, and what's the concern going to do at the end of it? Go back to making plows? Some other fellow will have got all the business by then. No, it's bad business. And it's worse morals. Isn't there something in the scriptures about turning your swords into plow-shares? I can't hold with them as reverses Scripture!"

And Paul found many who did not "hold with them as reverses Scripture." In three days' time he had bought half a dozen lots of stock, secured options on others, and proxies on these and still others. But he soon found that he was not the only buyer in the field. Early in the morning of the fourth day of his campaign, he came across three holders of old stock who had just sold out to Woodruff and his associates.

The inference was obvious. The manager's suspicions had been aroused; he had discovered Paul's activities, and his action showed conclusively that Paul's course was right, for Woodruff would not seek to fight him with his own weapons unless his reliance in the new company was nil. If he were trying to get old stock, he was afraid of new stock and Paul exulted in having his intentions justified.

Still it was one thing to exult and quite another to bring about the hoped for result. How had Woodruff's suspicions been aroused? He must have learned of Paul's purchases. Suddenly, it flashed over Paul that he was being watched. Two or three times, a man, a total stranger to him, had obtruded himself upon his notice and suddenly glancing up, he saw this individual sauntering towards him. Paul promptly determined to put his suspicions to the test. The next shop was a jeweler's and Paul entered and made a trifling purchase; the stranger did likewise. Then Paul strolled out of the store and down the street. As he was passing an old-fashioned office building, he wheeled suddenly, darted into the hallway and up the first flight of stairs. Instead, however, of continuing on up, Paul drew himself close to the wall in a nearby recess. Almost immediately his shadow panted up the stairs, and paused to rest and listen within a few feet of where Paul stood. The shadow tiptoed along the corridor, listened at various office doors and then stationed himself at the foot of the stairs. Paul could not go down without revealing the fact that he had adopted a ruse to trick the detective, and he had already made up his mind that it was very advisable to have a shadow you knew. Finally the watcher appeared to consider it a bad job and strolled away. Paul remained concealed some time longer and then made his escape unobserved. But he knew his enemies were watching him, and more important still, he could recognize the watcher.

The ludicrousness of using so obvious a sleuth made Paul smile; it was on a par with Woodruff's intelligence in everything where dollars and cents were not concerned. For this Sherlock Holmes was a stout, pudgy, middle aged man, whose clothes had an air of not wholly belonging to their wearer. His face was quite round and centered upon a thick bulbous nose which separated two tiny eyes that otherwise must have merged into one. His mouth was thick lipped but melancholy, a hopelessly inverted crescent. And his forehead was puckered with wrinkles, as though years of labored cogitation on the reason for his own existence had spent themselves fruitlessly. 'Twould have been the highest flattery to say he suggested a bulldog, but leaving out alert ears and steady eyes, there was a caricatural resemblance. To this brilliant example of misdirected energy had the task of watching Paul been entrusted. And somehow, shrewd and resourceful as he knew Woodruff to be, for the first time since he had begun his labors Paul felt the conviction that victory would be his lot.

More than confidence is required in a fight of this kind, however, especially with an adversary like Woodruff. Paul enlisted a few tried friends and a whirlwind canvass took place, each side fighting for a control. At the end of the week, totaling up their lists, the situation resolved itself into this: Their adversaries had a good deal of stock, not as much as they had, but still sufficient to give them a fighting chance. The deciding stock was in the possession of a local banker, who had long since retired from business and a man who had been a lifelong friend of his father, George Walker. If he could once get in touch with Mr. Walker, Paul felt that his day was won. But Mr. Walker had been away for a fortnight, his household did not know his whereabouts, and the election meeting was only a few days off. One of his young assistants, Ralph Troma, excitedly suggested that Walker had been spirited away by Woodruff and was all for laying the matter before the district attorney. And he grumbled mightily when Paul laughed him down. That was Friday. But when by the following Monday, Mr. Walker's whereabouts still remained a mystery, he began, despite himself, to lean towards Troma's views. To complicate matters—Mr. Walker was a bachelor—he found that his shadow had struck up an acquaintance with the Walker butler.

Late Monday afternoon, he resolved to make a last try at the Walker house. Then, if nothing were known, he was determined to enlist the services of some reliable detective agency. The meeting came on Wednesday although he could manœuver a postponement—suddenly the thought struck him, "Has Woodruff gotten control of the stock and is the old man purposely keeping out of my way?" Subconsciously he began to quicken his pace, until he was literally running when he turned in the street at the Walker gate. He was rather violently reminded of his speed, because he had bumped into a man who was coming down the path as rapidly as he was going up. It was the sleuth and with a grunt he dodged round Paul and set off up the street at a sharp trot.

His attention was attracted by the housekeeper who came running down the path waving the familiar yellow slip that means telegram.

The old lady had known Paul from childhood and she had been as interested almost as Paul himself in trying to find her master, despite her many years' experience in the latter's activities.

"Oh, Mr. Paul," she cried. "He's at Spintuns!"

"Who's that man, Martha," asked Paul, abruptly, pointing to the fat operative trotting up the street.

"I don't know, sir," answered Martha. "He's been about here, a bit, of late. Friends of Childes'"—this contemptuously, since Martha invariably despised the butler. "As a matter of fact he was in the hall when Childe gave me the telegram."

"Had Childe opened it?" asked Paul sharply. Martha was suddenly alarmed.

"What mean you, Master Paul?" she asked tremulously. "Yes, sir, he had it open in his hand and when he handed it to me he says, 'Master's at Spintuns!'"

"And then the fat man left the house?" Paul exclaimed rather than asked.

Martha nodded.

"Wire Mr. Walker, Martha, that I am coming, and ask him to wait my arrival," ordered Paul sharply. "I'd wire myself but he may have forgotten me."

"There's no danger to Mr. Walker, sir, is there?" quivered Martha.

"No, no," said Paul kindly, "but I wish that the fat man hadn't got the address first."

"That Childe's a bad lot," snapped Martha, vindictively. "I'd have set him packing long ago, if I had my way, but master's that—Drat the boy, where's *he* gone?"

Martha's question was addressed to empty air, for the fashionable street was treated to the spectacle of a tall, fashionably-clad young gentleman sprinting madly for down town. Paul ran as fast as he had ever run in his life until the crowds warned him of the danger he was encountering of being arrested. But even so, he arrived at his hotel at a brisk pace and took the stairway to the second floor two steps at a time, since the elevator was too slow. Nor did his speed decrease when he reached his room. A telephone call to the railway station informed him he had ten minutes to the only train until the following morning. But ten minutes was ample for him. Clothes and brushes leaped into his suitcase and he was back on the street and at the railroad station with two minutes to spare. A quick glance over the waiting passengers, and a hasty trip through the cars after the train was in motion, convinced Paul that his sleuth friend was not journeying with him and he settled down on the observation platform with a sigh of mingled relief and exhaustion. The train sped on and Paul smoked placidly.

But at the next station, Paul's cigar was flung on the track, with an exclamation of chagrin. For just as the train was slowing down, out of a cloud of dust on the road alongside the railway emerged a high powered racing car and in the crouched down figure in the passenger's seat, despite goggles, duster, cap and dust, Paul recognized his shadow. Paul suddenly found himself dwelling on the man's lower jaw, which had at first so amused him. Apparently the caricature of bulldog was rather indicative. Certainly the fellow showed no signs of giving up and as, leaning over the railing, Paul saw his sleuth hurl himself up the steps of the already moving train, he realized again that his fight was going to be a stiff one right into the last trench. Fortunately, even in the mad haste of his trip to the station, Paul had remembered that old Walker was still a keen financier and he had spent a precious five minutes at his bank. His hand caressed his bulging pocket book. If it came to bidding for Walker's stock, he was well equipped. He had a money belt with him, and he promptly transferred the small fortune in bills to a more secure receptacle than a purse. His sleuth might be a deft pickpocket for all his clumsy appearance, and Paul was going to take no chances with his eloquent hundred dollar bills.

He scrutinized the passengers on his way to the dining car without avail and later he strolled the entire length of the train. Many of the berths were already made up, however, and apparently his shadow was content to be non evident for that night at least.

The only stop between where they were and the junction where he had to change for the Spintuns train, was a little station that they reached at midnight. Paul gave a number of discreetly worded telegrams to the porter to be filed there; the telegrams were to friends, practically commandeering all their financial resources. If it came to money, Paul was going to have enough. Then he retired to rest, determined to be refreshed for the morning's work.

Bright and eager, Paul hopped off his car at the junction and sharply scrutinized the passengers alighting. Just as the train was about to pull out, a man slipped out of the car ahead of the one Paul had been in, brushed across to the platform and in to the station. Despite the upturned coat collar and the pulled down cap, Paul recognized his sleuth. He endeavored to catch up with him. But he was too late. The man had disappeared.

" Well, he'll have to board the Spintuns train anyway, so I can keep an eye on him," thought Paul. And he waited until the train was moving out of the station before boarding it. But much to Paul's surprise, and puzzled wonder, the sleuth did not appear nor was he on the train when Paul walked through it.

The more Paul though of this, the less he liked it, and the thirty minutes of the local's leisurely jolting to Spintuns gave him more occasion for anxiety than he had yet experienced. This mysterious move meant something dangerous, he was sure. His sleuth had not raced a train from Indianapolis for nothing, he had not concealed himself on board the train for nothing, that was sure. Why had he disappeared now? And it was a worried and apprehensive Paul who approached the desk in the Spintuns House and asked for Mr. Walker.

The clerk's reply turned him sick with dismay. Mr. Walker was not there. Yes, he had been there. Oh, he'd left the afternoon before. Where had he gone? The clerk leisurely turned to a forwarding book and after an interval drawled out that Mr. Walker had gone to White Pond. Where was that? Oh, it was a watering place about twenty five miles away. Yes, there was a train but it didn't leave until five that afternoon. If he wanted to get there quick, the clerk casually suggested, Paul might get an automobile. Yes, there was a garage and they had one good car, a block up the street and to the left. Mike Murphy was the owner and he was usually around.

Paul turned to leave. Then he asked the young clerk if anyone else had been looking for Mr. Walker. No, but someone had called him on the 'phone from Indianapolis the night before. Paul brought his fist down on the desk. Outwitted. Dull looking Mr. Bulldog had taken the precaution to find out where Walker was! And working with the rapidity of lightning, Paul's imagination saw him already on his way to White Pond, smiling grimly at the amateur's mismanagement. Still, to stand in the lobby of a hotel and call himself a fool wasn't going to help him, Paul thought, and he rushed out of the hotel and up to Murphy's garage. And just as he turned the corner, a high powered car whizzed past and in it was his sleuth!

One glance at the road in front of the garage explained the whole matter. There stood a racing car with one tire blown to ribbons. It was easy enough to see what had happened. The sleuth knowing that Walker was at White Pond, had hired a car at the junction and started for the resort. But tire troubles at Spintuns had stopped him for a moment and he had probably gotten Murphy's good car only a few minutes before Paul reached there. Again Paul cursed the lazy clerk at the hotel. Minutes counted. Pushing his way through the village idlers, although he knew it was useless, Paul asked for Murphy. He had just left, the smiling Hoosier helper told Paul, taking a passenger to White Pond.

"A fellow that looks like a bulldog?" gasped Paul.

"Well, I dunno as I'd like to speak so disrespectfully of a good breed o'dog as a bull is," remarked the helper, "but there is something in what you say. The fellow does look like a kind of dog. Friend o'yourn?" he added with an impudent smile.

"Friend nothing," blurted Paul. "But how in thunder am I to get to White Pond before him?"

"Why don't you fly?" drawled the helper.

"Fly!" yelled Paul. It was the last straw. "Fly!" he repeated. "For two plugged nickels I'd—"

"Now, don't get yourself all upset for nothing, stranger. It's a hot day," soothed the helper.

"But, man," exclaimed Paul. "This is a matter of life and death!"

"Well, well," answered the other. "But it won't do you any good to scrap. Besides, I could lick you, anyway. But when I said fly, I meant it. There's a lad down there who has an aeroplane and if you are really in a hurry, I think you might make a deal with him to carry you."

Without a moment's hesitation Paul replied briefly, "Where's the aviator?"

"Well, I must say, folks run quick and heedless, where you hail from," said the helper, admiringly. "But since you don't care about your neck, I should worry. Come on!"

And followed by all the idlers Paul and the helper made their way to the outskirts of the village where the aeronaut had his hangar. Fortunately he was there and after blinking a moment or two at Paul's determined demand to be carried over to White Pond at any price, he named a stiff one. Paul promptly produced the money. The machine was rolled out on the field, Paul boarded it and was strapped in and after the preliminary tinkering and testing, the aviator crawled into his seat and the great propellor began to whirl.

"Can we make it?" shouted Paul as the machine began to roll down the field.

"Can a fish swim?" grunted the aviator and relapsed into silence. At that moment Paul clutched the sides of his seat and then slowly and steadily began to waft up into the air. Paul felt at first a curious, sinking sensation. Then suddenly he was filled with a strange exhilaration. They were climbing steadily. The engines whined, the great propellor roared, the earth beneath them fell, fell, fell. Below them sped a flock of geese in full flight but their machine outstripped them.

"There's White Pond!" said the aviator, pointing out on the map of the earth a little cluster of buildings. "We'll be there in a jiffy!"

Suddenly with a sound like the snapping of thousands of whips, one of the plane's guy wires snapped, and the plane listed heavily.

"We're in for it!" exclaimed the aviator. "I have suspicioned that wire for some days, but you was in too much of a hurry. There goes another, by G—!" And as he spoke, with the sound of a machine gun, several other wires snapped.

It was obvious they were in grave peril. The machine was tipping and dipping, like a canoe in a choppy sea. Perspiration stood on the aviator's face, as his hand moved swiftly from lever to lever endeavoring to balance the machine with his good wing.

"We'll have to chance a glide to the lake," he shouted. "There's an excursion boat, there, and if we have any luck, she'll pick us up. Can you swim?"

Paul nodded.

"Cast off these straps then, an' be ready. I guess I can make it. Thank God, I gave the money you gave me to Bill!"

Had he not been so keenly alive to his own danger, the aviator's anxiety about his money, in a moment like this, would have made him laugh. However Paul's only feeling was that he wished he were where the money was, and out of this. He was not really afraid but the surface of the lake was rushing up to them with great speed and it looked menacing.

Meanwhile, his companion was handling his craft with extraordinary dexterity. Without power, for he had snapped the engine off promptly, with only one good wing, he was yet guiding the flight and keeping the machine on an even keel. Meantime, the excursion boat had slowed down and was obviously merely making enough headway to stand by when the machine should strike the water. The deck was black with passengers and Paul resented the ghoulish curiosity that kept glasses fixed upon their fall. Suddenly, when they were still twenty feet from the lake, the aviator yelled:

"She's going to buckle. Jump clear, for God's sake!"

With Paul, the action was film like. He remembered taking a flying leap sideways into the air, striking the water, going down, down, down and then shooting up to the surface. Shaking the water out of his eyes, he struck out. The aviator was swimming beside him, and the wrecked plane floated fifty feet away.

"Gee," sputtered the aviator. "I wish I could get my goggles off!"

And Paul uttered a roar of laughter, for the swimming man looked like some antediluvian monster and he was still chuckling, much to the other's rage, as willing hands hauled them up on the steamer's desk.

Once on deck, with that reaction characteristic of extreme peril, Paul laughingly told the bystanders that he would not have missed the whole experience, and he cheered the down-hearted aviator, by promising him to help him financially, on condition that he become his flying instructor. One of the officers furnished Paul with dry clothes and he appeared on deck to be surrounded by an admiring crowd. Suddenly he heard a familiar voice, and old George Walker forced his way through the throng and shook him warmly by the hand.

"You've got your father's pluck," he exclaimed. "I didn't recognize you at first with those goggles on. But what in the name of time put you up to such a fool stunt?"

"Chiefly to see you, sir," answered Paul, truthfully enough.

"Huh!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"Yes, sir," said Paul. "May I speak with you privately?"

Old Walker glanced at him keenly as if he questioned his sanity, but he drew him aside and listened patiently as Paul explained his mission. But it was soon evident that he considered that Paul's mission was as hair-brained as the trip in the flying machine. He couldn't see why he should consent to a course which would turn an enormously profitable enterprise into one less profitable; when one has a gray head on one's shoulders one has overcome the sentimentalities of youth. Paul made another plea. Then suddenly he glanced up toward the dock they were approaching. And there was Mike Murphy's car, and standing beside it was his familiar bulldog sleuth. Paul's lips thinned to a straight line, and he threw his shoulders back.

"By heaven, I'll get his stock," he decided. "Mr. Walker," he continued aloud, "my father has often told me the story of your brother's death at Gettysburg, how you crawled out on the field the night of the second day's battle to where your ear alone heard his voice calling for water, how, wounded yourself, you dragged him back within the lines and how—"

The old soldier threw back his shoulders.

"What do you mean, sir?" he demanded huskily.

"Where did the Confederates get the bullet that cut your brother off on the threshold of manhood?" demanded Paul, and giving the old man no chance for reply he made his way aft.

His plan was simplicity itself. He dashed into the engine room and brusquely demanded of the engineer, "Can you stop this boat?"

The engineer looked at him curiously but answered calmly, "Of course!"

"But can you stop it so no other person can start it for thirty minutes? This boat must not reach the shore in that time! Do you understand?" And Paul drew a fifty dollar bill from his pocket.

"Wait, Mr. Nehring," said the engineer. "Why?"

"I must have that time," said Paul determinedly. "I must have that time to convince an obstinate man that he must do right."

The engineer smiled. "Put up your money, Mr. Nehring. My mother gave you her proxy three days ago. We'll stay here all night if that's what you are doing." And he pressed a button and the boat stopped.

Amid the excited murmurs of the people on deck, Paul walked forward to find old Walker gazing before him with tear dimmed eyes. He paused a moment and then addressed the old man.

" You're your father's son, Paul," replied Mr. Walker. " I see your point, but business is business. Explain to me just what you mean to do. If it is trim and sound, and you will pay a fair price, I'll go in with you. A foreign bullet killed my brother. I see, I see! "

Rapidly and succinctly, Paul explained the situation and the important part Mr. Walker's stock played in it. The old man thought the matter over carefully. Then, on the back of an envelope, he carefully wrote out an assignment of his stock to Paul, and as he placed it in his hand, he said solemnly:

" My brother had no monument. He lies in that rolling field in Pennsylvania. But this is more endowing than stone. Forgive me Paul, I was hasty at first, but this business is of the devil. I pray God you win."

And as Paul thanked him warmly, the old man's eyes again filled with tears. Paul turned and walked towards the engine room. The captain was busily explaining to excited passengers that the repairs were progressing. Paul squeezed his way through the group, and leaning through the door called loudly, "Well, Mr. Engineer, how long are we going to be tied up here?"

The engineer glanced up and then answered with a smile. "Everything all right, sir?"

Paul nodded. The engineer bent over his machinery and almost immediately the boat beban to move through the water.

As Paul walked down the gangplank, the sleuth eagerly scanned the passengers. Just at that moment old Walker came up with Paul and taking his arm, began to talk with him familiarly. The sleuth gazed at them a moment. Then with a muttered imprecation he jumped back into his car and was whirled away. Paul had won.

CHAPTER XV

A PRE-HISTORIC MONUMENT

WHEN Paul returned, his associates received him with open arms. They knew the reason for his absence, and fully realized the responsibilities that rested on the success or lack of success of his mission, and when he showed them the assignment of the Walker stock, hats were thrown high into the air. In order to make doubly sure of the matter, Mr. Walker's banker was called to the office late that night—long after business hours—and delivered the certificates of stock.

Afterward, Paul and his associates gathered in his rooms, and a plan to capture the munition plant was formulated.

" We are confronted with a peculiar situation, gentlemen," said Paul, smiling. " There is apparently no war in this country, and yet we are planning, to-night to capture an ammunition plant."

" What if Woodruff turns those shells on us? " jokingly remarked one of the others.

" We will sure be up against it, then," replied another, " for I overheard the ammunition agent say to Woodruff, only yesterday, that those shells would kill more Germans to the square inch than any similar shell made. I suppose it would work the same on other nationalities—even the Irish." And he winked at Mr. O'Brien, a shareholder present.

" Our plan of action will be this," said Paul. " We will go down to the factory together, armed, each in his own right, and with the various proxies we possess. We will march into the directors' room where the annual meetings are held and as they have honored me with the office of first vice-president, since my father's death, in the absence of Mr. Black, the president, who is on the Pacific Coast, it will be my duty, under the by-laws, to preside. I will refuse to recognize any claims of right by virtue of the last illegal stock issue. We will put through our plans according to programme and according to law. We'll storm the citadels of the enemy, and capture all the offices."

" And we'll let Woodruff have his shells," said another.

" No, we will not," responded Paul. " He has already been instrumental in producing more hell upon earth, I dare say, than a hundred evil-minded men could have done, ordinarily, in a hundred years. We'll turn the shells into cultivators, and thus modernize the scriptural injunction of beating swords into plow-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks."

A poet said, and truthfully, that, "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men, gang aft a-gley." And while Paul and his friends were planning an offensive movement, Woodruff and his henchmen, assisted by Sir William, were mapping out a scheme of opposition and entrenchment. They proposed to raise every question, and employ every dilatory method at their command—anything to keep the factory going and the shell-output undiminished.

The next morning Paul called at the Tremont to see Miss Price. He had been careful to ascertain beforehand that Sir William was out of town, as he did not care to meet, for the present, either Sir William or Woodruff. He had seen neither since their conference at the hotel several days before.

He was met at the door by Lady Price, or "Aunt Flora," as he knew her. She greeted him kindly, even heartily. He spent a pleasant hour with Edith and Aunt Flora and could see no change of attitude. He wondered if Sir William had really informed them of the preparations for the coming battle, and the fact that he would be on the opposite side.

As Paul was about to leave, he told Edith that he had his car in the city, and would be delighted to drive her anywhere about the neighborhood. She promptly accepted his invitation, and that afternoon he called for her, driving the car himself. They had visited most of the places of interest, in and about the city, and finally drove far in the country to a large Indian mound.

This mound was but one of many of the monuments erected by that pre-historic race, known as the Mound Builders. The mound itself is a ponderous structure of earth, from seventy-five to a hundred feet in height, with a wide base, and tapering almost to a point. Overgrown with trees and shrubbery it has the appearance of being a slight hill but its real identity was familiarly known.

"Shall we scale it?" she said to him daringly.

"Yes," he replied. "There will be a beautiful view."

They struggled up the steep sides and with considerable effort, finally reached the top, where they sat side by side, looking out over the great plains of Indiana.

The day was bright, and the weather balmy. In the far, far distance the smoke of the city could be barely seen; on all sides stretched the fruitful country, dotted with farm houses and occasional groves. Here and there, their spiral of smoke showed where cozy dwellings nestled in the bosom of the gentle rolling hills.

"What a grand view it is!" she said. "And to think that those Indians, of long ago, should so toil and build that you and I might sit here and enjoy this feast."

"And I'm sure that if they were here now and saw your contentment, they would not regret the effort," he replied.

"But it must have taken a great many Indians to build this?" she asked.

"Yes, myriads," he replied, "and many years too."

"But to be truly honest in this matter," she continued, "I don't really believe they built this for you and me, or anyone, except themselves. They must have had some use for it."

"Yes," said Paul, "they did have certain uses for it, but I really believe they intended to leave it as a monument of their time. Even if they did not so intend, it has, nevertheless, so resulted; and we are able to determine even to-day, from this monument of their efforts, the habits, characteristics, and civilization of the builders. Every age has left its monuments, some visible, some invisible; some more durable than others."

"How can an age erect invisible monuments, and leave them so that the successive generation may see them? What would they build them out of?" she asked curiously.

"Invisible monuments," he answered, "are built in the hearts of men, and oftentimes are more durable than even earth or stone or granite."

"If they are built in the hearts of men, and those hearts cease beating, surely such monuments must crumble?" she replied.

"No," he answered slowly. "The monument that our forefathers erected in the hearts of men, and dedicated to the inalienable rights of men, will exist as a great source of inspiration many generations hence, and will be a dominating force when the Pyramids of Egypt shall be no more, or the great obelisks of stone or granite—when even this monument shall have been leveled by the deteriorating processes of time. That beautiful invisible structure, The Ten Commandments, still exists, in the face of thousands of years of time, and stands to-day, as in the past, the highest precept to human actions. Among these precepts are the injunctions, 'Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself,' and 'Thou Shalt Not Kill.' The monuments of murder and hate that they are erecting in Europe to-day, will stand firmly as an evidence of their time, and as a blight and a curse, many many years after those warm hearts shall have ceased to pulsate. Your uncle and Mr. Woodruff intend that I shall be a party to this monument building, but I refuse."

She was silent for a long time, then she asked rather timidly.

"What kind of monument do you think this age will erect to truly perpetuate the fact that it has existed?"

Paul was silent in turn for some time. Then he answered slowly:

"That is indeed difficult to say. A year or so ago, I should have said that this age will erect the grandest and most glorious structure of them all, and dedicate it to Brotherhood. It is true we have partially erected such a monument—its foundations have been laid, and the superstructure partially constructed. Many who have looked upon it, still in its crude and unfinished condition—because it has not now the lines, the form or the polish of a finished monument—have condemend it as a mistake, the plan itself as a failure. I confess that these foundations of Brotherhood are receiving an awful shaking—earthquake-like—in Europe to-day."

"And, too, there are those who find it to their own pecuniary interest to level down even that which we have already builded, for a completion of such structure would indeed be a menace to their business. In our own land insidious elements are now at work, undermining such foundations. One of the organized forces is the group of the makers of arms, ammunition and armor-plate. They are ready to transplant to American soil the fears and hates of Europe. They are now inciting many of the large dailies to the principles of hate, by attacking a large portion of our population whom they call hyphenated Americans. They denounce the latter, and heap unalloyed abuse upon them and their descendants, because they dare raise their voices against such immoral and murderous practice—the active participation in the taking of human life." Paul's voice grew hard.

" Yes, they would, in our own land, array race against race, if they could. As if any one race possessed all the virtues, and another possessed none. But fears and hates are necessary to their business, and hates among ourselves are more likely to engender our hates against a neighbor nation, or against those that are far away. According to their processes of reasoning, we are likely to awaken any morning to find a hostile invading force upon our shores, and our homes and our loved ones imperiled. And it is a psychological effect, too, for first we fear—then we hate—and then we fight.

" And when they have succeeded—if they shall succeed—upon yonder height, no doubt, will be erected a formidable fort, as will be built ponderous defenses along our northern boundary, and along the Rio Grande. They will proceed with their systems of fear and hate, by training citizens in large numbers in the arts of human destruction. They will divert the minds of the greatest men, the inventive geniuses, from the avenues of peace, to the devising and construction of the most awful death-dealing instruments. And all this will be done for the gold that wars, and preparation for wars, produce to a favored few."

He told her of his views on the munition question—how he had labored for many days in order to get control of a corporation that his father had helped build up, of his intention to reconvert it into a plow factory, an industry of peace, and he ended solemnly;

"No matter what the consequences may be, no matter what friendships may be alienated, God helping, I shall defeat your uncle and I shall defeat Woodruff."

When he had finished, she said not a word—either of approval or disapproval—but she placed her hand upon his arm, as she had done when they stood on the veranda facing the sea and he had told her of his views of war.

"But the sun is setting—we must go," she said simply.

They had found it quite difficult to ascend—

they found it more so to descend. They had proceeded but a short distance when Edith's foot slipped, and she sprained her ankle, and would have fallen down the side of the mound had he not caught her. While the injury was not severe, yet she could not rest her weight upon the sprained foot without suffering much pain.

With his assistance, they ascended again to the top of the mound, where she sat and rested. He removed her shoe and administered to her afflicted foot as best he could.

Then he said, "There are two alternatives; you can either stay up here until you fully recover, or I can carry you down. Which do you choose?"

"There is no alternative," she replied, "for I cannot stay up here—I should die of fright. Who knows but the spirits of those departed builders hover around this mound every night—climbing up these sides in countless hosts! Ugh! I can feel them clambering over me, even now."

He picked her up in his arms, and proceeded slowly—cautiously, down the side. Her limb was still paining somewhat, but she smiled up in his face as he carried her.

"This is really romantic," she said humorously. "I shall assume that we are living in the prehistoric past, when all those Indians, of whom I am one, were engaged in building this structure.

I am the Indian Princess Beulawa. In an adventurous spirit she has climbed up here to see if her father's warriors have finished the mound. But she meets with an accident, upon its dizzy height fear possesses her, and she is unable to return."

"Yes," rejoined Paul, "and her father, the great Chief Moundemup, at last discovers her plight. He calls upon Digawhil, one of his trusty and brave young warriors, to rescue her. He scales the height and seizes the fair Princess Beulawa in his arms. While carrying her down the precipitous side of the mound, he falls madly in love with her; and when they have finally descended, he bears her to a mysterious looking chariot with four wheels, that goes, 'chug! chug! chug!' and which the gods had provided, and he carries her off." And laughing, he placed her in the motor car, climbed in beside her, and they sped away.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ANNUAL MEETING

THE day of the annual election of officers arrived, and at a time agreed upon beforehand, Paul and his associates went down to the factory together. When they got there they found that Woodruff and his friends had preceded them and were already in the directors' room; Woodruff was in the chair.

It was evident that trouble was brewing, and that the gentleman in possession intended to preside at the meeting. This was an unlooked for element, something they hadn't foreseen when they made their plans. Paul hastily called Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Charlesworth, another stockholder, aside, and they engaged in a whispered conversation. In the meantime their associates filed in and took their seats up near the front.

"What is your pleasure, gentlemen?" said Woodruff to the assembled members, just as Paul stepped into the room. The latter walked down the aisle and stopped.

"Pardon me, but I believe I am first vice-president, and under the by-laws I am the presiding official, in the absence of the president," he said.

"But you are late, Mr. Nehring," said Woodruff, "and as I am second vice-president and have the chair, under the circumstances I know of no parliamentary rule whereby I can be divested of it."

At this the Woodruff party gave every manifestation of satisfaction.

"But you are wrong," said Paul, "both in your views of parliamentary rules, and as to the time. The meeting was called for two, and it is now only one forty-five."

And at that very instant the town clock began to clang out its "quarter till" warning, nailing the lie to Woodruff's contentions.

As the clock began to strike, the man in the chair flushed darkly. Paul stood motionless, and everyone listened while it marked the first quarter, the second quarter and then the third quarter of the hour. The clock ceased striking. A ripple of laughter went over the assembled members and even Woodruff's supporters could not help but smile at his ridiculous position.

"We will proceed to business, at once," said Woodruff as he straightened up in his chair and assumed a firm attitude.

"Just a moment!" said Paul. He raised his hand and advanced immediately in front of the chairman's table. "I now demand of you, Mr. Woodruff, that you vacate the chair!"

"Which request, Mr. Nehring, I positively refuse!" Woodruff replied with emphasis.

At this juncture, Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Charlesworth, each broad shouldered, and towering in the neighborhood of six feet, advanced hurriedly up the aisle, seized the chair, with Woodruff in it, then turned and marched down the aisle and deposited the chair—Woodruff and all—in the rear.

After performing their mission, they again marched up the aisle, keeping perfect step. When they had arrived immediately in front of the table they parted company, each going to one end and standing like two Roman guards on duty.

The quickness and precision with which the feat was performed brought rounds of laughter and applause from at least a part of the audience of stockholders. In the meantime Paul moved his own chair back of the table and occupied it, and as he glanced at his body guards, and surveyed their stature, he knew that his position was as impregnable as the proverbial Rock of Gibralter.

By this time Woodruff was livid with rage, and he jumped upon his chair.

"Gentlemen, those of you who do not approve of this outrage, follow me to the north wing, and there the annual meeting of the stockholders will be held!" he shouted, waving his arms in the air. Then stepping from the chair he walked out hurriedly, followed by his henchmen and associates.

So that day, there were two annual meetings of the stockholders of The Central Plow Works Company, one presumably regular, the other a rump, and both held at the same time. The meeting of the holders of stock held in the directors' room closed after selecting Paul as President and Mr. O'Brien as manager, and filling all of the other offices, and after resolutions had been passed defining the general policies and purposes of the concern for the ensuing year.

That evening Paul went to the Tremont to call upon Miss Price, and to inquire as to the condition of her ankle. He was greatly surprised to be greeted by a nurse in uniform.

"I should like to see Miss Price," said Paul apprehensively.

"That is impossible, for Miss Price is very sick, and cannot be disturbed," she answered.

"Is her ankle worse?"

"No, but she is very ill."

He was about to turn away when Lady Price, or Aunt Flora, came to him, her countenance very grave.

"Miss Price is very ill?" he inquired anxiously.

"Yes, poor girl, it is a hard blow."

"Then it is not her ankle?" he asked.

"No," she answered, and hesitated. Paul was about to ask another question, when she continued. "I shall have to tell you something, that, no doubt, you do not know. Edith was engaged to marry one of the finest young men that England ever produced. When war came, he enlisted, and served his country with distinction. But war is terrible, Mr. Nehring, it is terrible! This morning she received a cablegram that he had fallen. He was killed in action." She placed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"This is terrible news!" said Paul sincerely. "I am so deeply grieved for Miss Price!—War—It is all wrong to thus rob her, his country, and the world, of such a noble and useful life."

"I am sorry that you can't see her, but the doctor says the poor child must be kept very quiet, and the worst of it is, we can do nothing for her."

"When she is better," said Paul, the tears standing in his own eyes, "tell her, for me, that she has my heartfelt sympathies. And if there is anything I can do, do not hesitate to call on me at any time."

CHAPTER XVII

CAPTURING AN AMMUNITION PLANT

A DEMAND had been made upon Woodruff and some of the other officials who had served the previous year to vacate their offices, turn over the books, and deliver the keys to the new officers. This they refused to do. They asserted that they were elected for the ensuing year. Woodruff even went so far as to contend that he was not only re-elected manager, but president as well.

The suspicions of Paul and his associates were now confirmed, that the opposition would not deliver possession of the plant peaceably, that they would continue to try to operate in the usual way until the whole matter could be fully determined in the courts. This was far from satisfactory to Paul, for he did not want the ammunition output to continue longer. To take the matter into the courts might permit Woodruff to remain in control for several months. The Nehring group were confident, however, of ultimate victory even in the courts. Accordingly, they decided to take the plant by storm, as had been done at the stockholder's meeting.

"We shall stay clearly within the law, too," said Paul. "A stolen horse can always be recovered by the rightful owner, without legal process, if it can be done without committing a breach of the peace. We are entitled to the possession of this factory. We won't commit any violations of law, either, in getting it."

Woodruff anticipated some such move, however, and had placed an extra force of guards, heavily armed, to watch the plant at night. He had, in fact, provided guards ever since a short time after the first consignment of ammunition had been shipped; he feared that someone laboring under the belief that a foreign relative had been killed by his shells might commit some act of violence upon the factory.

It was arranged that on a certain morning, the elected officers, including Paul, should go to the plant, and take possession, before Woodruff and the others would be on hand. If there was to be a lawsuit, they proposed that Woodruff should be put into a position whereby he would be required to take the initiative.

So one misty day just before dawn, they stole down to the plant and ensconced themselves behind a shed near the building. One of their number who had been sent to reconnoiter, soon returned with the information that nearly all the guards were in the rear of the factory building, that there was an ungrated window on the west side, and a single guard sitting near by, apparently fast asleep.

They hastily agreed upon a plan of action. Headed by O'Brien, the whole company rushed at the guard near the window. The poor fellow awoke just as they were almost upon him. He jumped to his feet and raised his gun but before he had time to use it, O'Brien seized the gun while Troma grappled with its owner. The young athlete finally overcame the guard and sent him reeling and sprawling down a ten foot embankment, where he landed in about four feet of water.

By the time the guard had recovered from his surprise and clambered out of the ditch, the factory window had been forced and they all crawled in. The sudden blazing of all the electric lights throughout the plant, warned the remaining guards that everything was not right and they hastily advanced to the front of the main building. Paul had just stepped into the manager's office and taken down a file, when a crash of glass startled him. He turned part way around to find himself looking into the muzzles of half a dozen shot-guns.

"Hold up your hands," came the command, clear and sharp.

Paul did nothing of the kind. He stood facing them, then took a couple of steps briskly forward.

"Put down those guns! I say, put down those guns!" he ordered again advancing toward them. Surprised and bewildered the guards slowly withdrew the gun-barrels from the window. Paul put his head through the broken pane and peered out.

"What are you ruffians doing here, anyway? I'm the president of this concern. You have assaulted me with deadly weapons! This is a serious offense. Now, you move, every one of you, for if I find you on these premises in two minutes, I'll call the police."

His absolute indifference to the fact that they were armed, and his obvious indignation at what he regarded as an idiotic and ridiculous intrusion had the desired effect. Nothing so flusters dull people as being made ridiculous without their knowing how it is done. The six ox-like guards felt that somehow they were being made fools of, and they stupidly retreated towards another group. There must have been a dozen all told. Then a long whispered council took place, the result of which was that the dozen men vanished in the darkness of the early dawn. About an hour later, two of them returned, without their guns, however.

"We came back for the bunch," said one of them. "We want to know who is going to pay us and how long the job lasts?"

"You had better see Woodruff," Paul replied. "He hired you. As for further service here, we do not need any of you. From now on, this is a plow factory—not a man-killing establishment; man-killing establishments need guards —plow factories don't. Good-morning," and Paul turned away.

News of the seizing of the plant reached Woodruff early, and he arrived on the scene in short order. When he discovered that Paul and the other officers were in possession, his rage knew no bounds.

"You have no right to do this," he yelled, pounding Paul's desk. "Not one of you has any right here! You've got no authority to be here! You're trespassing!

"We have possession anyway, and that is nine points of the law," said Paul.

"Yes, you have the nine points all right, but I'll beat you all on the tenth point," sneered Woodruff. "You wait until I get you into court, and then you'll see what your nine points look like!"

"Go as far as you like!" answered Paul.

"Get me into court as soon as you please. In fact, the reason I'm here is to force your hand!"

Woodruff bit his lip, and did not reply for a minute or two. Then he said more composedly.

"But surely you will carry out those ammunition contracts with Price. He will sue the concern for big damages, if we don't. I believe the courts will restrain you from preventing the fulfillment of those contracts, and the conversion of this highly profitable business into one of but little returns."

"Very well," replied Paul, "if the courts require us to pay damages, we shall disburse it from the enormous ammunition earnings. It's blood money, anyway, and I wager that a corporation, like an individual, never profits by blood money in the long run."

"There is one condition on which we will complete and fulfill those contracts," said Mr. O'Brien, the new manager. "If the matter in them is changed from 'shells' to plows' and old Price will agree to use them in peaceful industries, we'll carry out the agreements."

Woodruff's only reply was a ferocious scowl which had a positively exhilarating effect upon the genial Irishman. The former manager glared at the other officers who were watching him curiously. Then slamming his hat on his head and banging the door behind him, he left the factory.

When the workers reported that morning, they were informed that the plant was closed for a month, in order to re-convert it into a plow-making institution. The expert ammunition makers were told that their services were no longer needed, and the other employees were informed that they were continued on the pay roll, at half pay, until the concern could resume operations.

CHAPTER XVIII

FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT

THE plant had been closed only a day when Woodruff began legal proceedings to regain control. He succeeded in securing from the court a temporary injunction, restraining Paul from interfering with the operation of the factory, and enjoining them in particular from interfering or inducing any of the employes not to return to work at the plant. This injunction was in force and effect, to last until all of the issues involved in the main case should be tried out in court.

The suit papers, including the injunction or restraining order, were served upon Paul and his associates, by the sheriff, late the same day.

In the complaint, which was served with the other papers, Woodruff raised every possible question of fact, and all legal questions that were pertinent to the issues, or that could possibly be suggested by farfetched and circuitous processes of reasoning.

This order of injunction virtually placed Woodruff in control of the corporation again, until the case should be tried, and the whole matter judicially determined. While Paul and his co-defendants expected a suit to be begun, they did not believe the court would go so far as to issue an injunction.

Nothing could be done, therefore, but give in, for the present. However, Woodruff found that it was quite difficult to reopen the plant. All of the experts had already gone, and as there was trouble brewing, it would be difficult to get them back. Furthermore, as the other employees had been assured that they would be retained on the pay roll, at half pay, during the time the factory was closed, many had taken advantage of the offer to go on a vacation. Even those who remained listened to Woodruff's entreaties to return without enthusiasm, as they had already made up their minds to take a rest—a rest with half pay, anyway.

Instead of reopening the plant in a day or two, as he had hoped, he found it could not be done for two or three weeks, at least. As the trial of the case would take place soon, he knew that he could not reopen the factory before the action would be tried, and all rights determined. The first morning's work of Mr. O'Brien and his helpers was consequently, more far-reaching than the opposition had realized. Now when it was discovered that the factory could not possibly be opened soon, Woodruff and his henchmen were embittered to the point where they were ready to take any desperate steps. Their feelings toward Paul amounted to personal enmity.

One day, shortly after the injunction had been served, Paul returned from a brief visit to his farm, and was slowly driving down the street in his car, when the sheriff of the county hailed him. He immediately stopped and the official came over to the car.

"I am bound to place you under arrest, Mr. Nehring, although I do not want to," said the sheriff to Paul, as he handed him several papers, including a warrant of arrest.

"But what have I done? What is my offense?" exclaimed Paul in great surprise.

"Read the copy of the court's order and Woodruff's affidavit. They explain all. It's pretty bad business."

Paul read the copies eagerly, and if a dozen of Woodruff's largest shells had suddenly dropped about him, they could not have surprised him more. It was charged that Paul had, after being served with the injunction papers, deliberately disregarded the court's orders and wilfully induced employees of the factory not to return to work; and that by reason of such acts on the part of Paul, the factory was unable to reopen, and consequently could not carry out its contracts.

If these charges were true, they constituted a serious offense. It was contempt of court, in fact, and this subjected him to possible severe punishment.

Paul perceived his peril immediately. That he was the victim of a cabal, for he knew the charges were false, did not lessen the danger. He was not guilty. He had not seen or communicated in any manner with a single employee of the concern since the injunction was placed. But perjured testimony was not beyond desperate men.

The contempt charges came up for hearing the next afternoon before the judge who had issued the injunction. Woodruff was present with counsel, and Paul appeared with his attorney, John Morris. The evidences introduced on the part of the complainants were abundant and convincing.

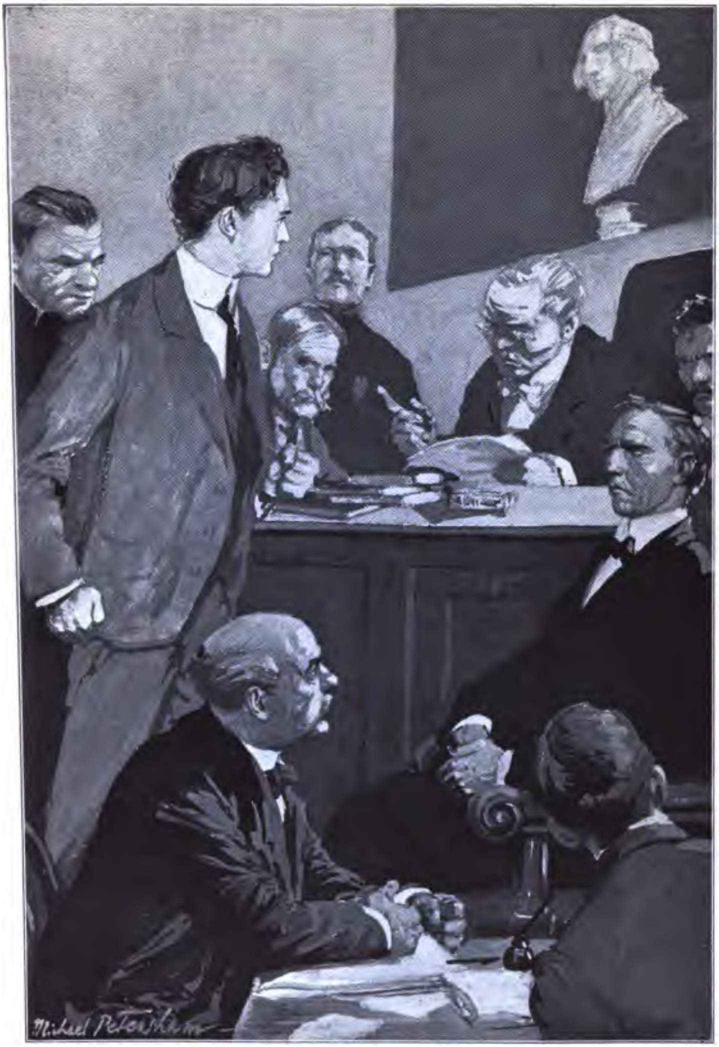
A dozen or more of the employees of The Central Plow Works Company testified, each, that he had received a typewritten letter which was dated and received after the papers had been served upon Paul and his associates. Some of them testified further that they did not return to work at the factory because of the threats contained in these letters.

The various letters were properly identified by the persons receiving them, and introduced as evidence. The letters were identical in substance and wording. No handwriting appeared on any of them, but each was signed, in typewriting, "The Central Plow Works Company," and purported to come from the president de facto.

In substance each letter requested that the recipient should not return to work at the factory to help manufacture ammunition, and that the court's injunction need not govern their actions; and that if any one of the employees did return to work before the plant was re-converted into a plow factory again, he would be severely dealt with when Woodruff and his followers were finally ousted. The letter concluded with a severe attack upon the court for having issued the injunction.

The sheriff went upon the witness stand and testified that, armed with a proper search-warrant, he had gone to Paul's rooms at his hotel and seized a typewriting machine and some letters, un-addressed. He produced the letters and the machine.

The letters were identical with the ones already introduced in the evidence. A demonstration, in court, on the typewriter showed that there was a defect in the machine, one of the characters being out of alignment. All of the letters received by employees, as well as those discovered in the room at the hotel, clearly showed



AS THE JUDGE PRONOUNCED THE SENTENCE, PAUL CLENCHED HIS FISTS UNTIL THE KNUCKLES SHOWED WHITE.

this defect. There could be no question that all of them had been written on the machine found in Paul's room.

Paul went on the stand in his own behalf, and denied everything. He hotly denounced the whole proceedings as a " frame up " on the part of the opposition. The Court, however, refused to consider this (which was to be expected on view of the evidence) and immediately found him guilty of contempt of court.

In pronouncing sentence the court denounced Paul's alleged conduct severely and concluded by saying:

" In some cases of this character, there may be mitigating circumstances, due to ignorance. In this instance, however, it cannot be. You are versed in the law, and familiar with the true meaning and import of an injunctional order. Your conduct was deliberate and reprehensible. I therefore find you guilty of contempt, and fix the penalty at twenty days' imprisonment."

As the judge pronounced the sentence, Paul clenched his fists until the knuckles showed white. His rage at his arrest as a spy in England, was nothing, to his feelings at this moment.

" I will grant you this concession, however," continued the judge. " In order that you may not be too greatly inconvenienced, I will give you a week's time to attend to your affairs before commencing your term of imprisonment. You will, therefore, begin the serving of your sentence, one week from to-day."

At this junction, however, Woodruff's attorney objected to the concession and demanded that the sentence begin immediately. Said he:

"If you give him a week's time, with his known proclivities for violating courts' orders, it will only serve to place him in a position where he may, in the meantime, commit other acts of violence and further prevent the opening of the factory. He is a dangerous man to let run loose at any time."

The vicious, sneering untruth of this statement almost made Paul reel, and he shifted from one foot to the other. He glanced around at the audience—for he knew that the attorney's words were meant to influence the audience more than the court—and his gaze fell upon Mr. O'Brien. The Irishman's face was drawn and tense, and there was a fire in his eyes that he had never seen before.

"Very well," said Paul, indignantly, his own eyes flashing. "If it will do them any good, I'll take my punishment now. It will be over quicker, and I'll get back into the fight earlier." And bowing to the judge, "I'm ready to begin my sentence at once, your honor."

Barney Flynn, the deputy sheriff, who had been an interested auditor, stepped forward to conduct Paul to a cell. They were about to pass out of the door of the courtroom, when the judge called to the deputy: "Remember Mr. Flynn, that when I sentenced this defendant to imprisonment, I did not mean that he should roam about the court-house grounds in the custody of an officer of guard. I meant imprisonment!"

"Yis, yer Onner," said Flynn, "If oi understand ye, in this pertickler case, imprishonment means imprishonment," and he bowed and they passed out, and Barney never knew how near he came to committing contempt of court.

Woodruff and his friends were exuberant. They had scored a notable victory, they thought, and they decided that the moral effect of Paul's imprisonment would influence the public, and even have great bearing on the coming trial of the factory case.

But they had reckoned without their host.

The daily papers of the city announced Paul's imprisonment in striking head lines, and gave a brief history of the case, the capture of the ammunition plant, the injunction and its "Flagrant violation."

One of the dailies indulged in a lengthy editorial on the situation, stating that "Paul Nehring, a pro-German sympathizer, had so far forgotten his Americanism as to defy the laws of his country and its courts. He had attempted to use force and violence to prevent the manufacture of a legitimate product of commerce, to embarass one of the most prosperous concerns in the city, and thus throw out of employment large numbers of laborers with families, who must necessarily suffer as a consequence." It then entered into a protracted discussion of "hyhens" and "hyphenated Americans," and concluded:

"But we wish to apologize to Sir William Price, who is sojourning in our midst on important business, for this outburst of lawlessness, and trust that he will not carry back with him to his native land a belief that all Americans, or any appreciable number of them, are actuated by such anarchistic motives. We regret that the community has suffered this stigma. Again we apologize to the distingushed visitor from abroad, and ask him to overlook this incident, and remember us as an industrious, broad-minded people, bent on doing our whole duty to the world, and determined to maintain our strictly neutral attitude in this conflict—bereft of any foolish and sentimental munition scruples."

But the news of Paul's imprisonment, and the scathing editorials, did not produce the effect upon the people that Woodruff and his henchmen had anticipated, or that the newspapers had expected. On the other hand, while the public believed that Paul was really guilty of contempt of court, in that he had induced employees to refrain from helping produce ammunition, they concluded that his zeal was prompted by his efforts to prevent the commission of a greater crime against morality—the crime against humanity.

Consequently his name was upon every lip, and the more the matter was discussed, the more belief in his attitude grew among the people, until, with them, he finally became a hero. During the first few days of his imprisonment he received hundreds of telegrams and letters, extending sympathy, and congratulating him on his moral stand. Some of these came from a considerable distance. The profusion of flowers sent him by local sympathizers almost converted his cell into a veritable flower garden.

CHAPTER XIX

IRISH STRATAGEM

FOR the first week or more of Paul's imprisonment in the county jail, located on the ground floor of the court-house, he was kept quite busy shaking hands through the bars with his many friends and admirers. These expressions of sympathy and good will spurred him on for the coming conflict.

However, he found that his confinement proved a handicap in the preparation of his side of the case. The court had already set the date for the beginning of the battle that would determine definitely the control and the future output of The Central Plow Works Company.

He was visited daily by John Morris and by the various stockholders, but he did not enjoy the advantage in preparation that he would have had, had he been free to go and come.

Paul's principal attendant was his old friend, the deputy sheriff, Barney Flynn. Barney sympathized with Paul, and even Paul himself was not more pleased than Barney at the open and overpowering popular expression of admiration for his prisoner. Barney was bitterly opposed to Woodruff, and to the ammunition agent, and he was not loath to show it.

It had become a custom, of late, for Woodruff to spend considerable time at the court-house in the court-room and in the corridors—and he made it a point to talk with and make the acquaintance of everyone. Barney was not long in taking note of this, and he had his own suspicions as to why the manager was so cordial to all. Now Barney was as resourceful as he was talkative, and one day when Woodruff was loitering in the corridors, Barney hastened down to Paul's cell, a broad grin on his countenance.

"Oi want to borrer an armful of your bokays, Paul," he said.

"Very well," Paul replied, "they are at your disposal. You're up to some devilment, Barney, I can see it in your eye."

By this time the deputy-sheriff was grinning from ear to ear, and had to put his hand over his mouth to keep from laughing.

"You're right, mi lad, oi'm goin' to rub it in strong," he replied as he helped himself to large quantities of the flowers.

He passed out by way of a back door, then went around to the front and entered the main entrance of the court-house with his burden of flowers, walked casually down the main corridor and passed Woodruff, apparently not noticing the latter. Woodruff hailed him, however, just as he passed and came to Barney's side.

"Beautiful flowers, those! A banquet or wedding on?" he inquired as he scented and apparently admired them.

"Naither, sor! These air jest a few expresshuns ov simpathy and koindness fer me prishoner, Mr. Nehring," and Barney walked away briskly.

Returning to the cell, the deputy sheriff waited a few minutes, added more flowers to his armful, and then pursued the same route. Entering the corridor again, he found Woodruff still walking up and down.

"Some more flowers for the prisoner?" asked Woodruff as he came to Barney. His tone was jocular, but the expression in his eyes was quite the reverse, a fact of which the deputy sheriff instantly made note.

"Yis," he responded, "Oi nevver saw it beat in all mi loife—so menny flowers fer one person."

"Is this a daily occurrence?" asked Woodruff. Even his voice now showed his active concern.

"Oh, it happuns verry fraquentley, Mishter Woodruff! Faith, if they don't thurn him out purty sune, we'll hev to build a new jail to hold all thu flowers. It does bate all, how popular that feller is! Why, if he'd run fer guvvernur to-morrow, he'd be elicted, hands down."

That Barney's news and Barney's views were anything but pleasing to Woodruff was most obvious. He shifted from foot to foot and his jocular expression had given place to an angry scowl. He had caused Paul to be placed in prison for the moral effect it would produce, and to pave the way for a glorious victory in the lawsuit then pending. It was working out quite differently. The weapon that he flung had turned, seemingly, into a boomerang.

Barney was quite aware of the effect he was creating on Woodruff and he continued amiably:

"Jist come down to thu jail, Mishter Woodruff, and Oi'll show ye thu foinest soight ye ivver seed. There isn't a flowerring shpot in the country thot kin compair with it! It's a reggular Garden of Aden!"

He became so enthusiastic in telling it, that he dropped half of the flowers on the floor. He knew that Woodruff would not accept the invitation—that was why he invited him.

"No, I shall not have time now, Barney, some other time," immediately exclaimed the manager and he turned and walked hurriedly out of the court-house.

The deputy sheriff quickly returned to the cell—his large right hand pressed tightly over his mouth, and when he had deposited the flowers on the table he threw himself upon Paul's cot and rolled and laughed, till the tears rolled down his cheeks. It was several minutes before he could talk in a sufficiently coherent manner to his young friend to have Paul understand what had happened. Paul, disturbed as he was, could not refrain from joining in the Irishman's amusement.

Paul had not seen Edith Price since he carried her down the side of the precipitous mound and back to the Tremont to the Price apartments. Returning to his room that night he had sat for hours in his chair, in deep meditation. He knew, now, that the old passion had returned, that John Long's efforts and his southern trip were for naught, so far as those particular wounds were concerned; they were again torn and bleeding.

When he had learned of the loss of her fiance he had longed to go to her and express in person his sympathy, but he put off the day, for fear that she might misconstrue his motive. He knew that she understood the yearnings of his heart. And then when he would have gone, his days were so full of eventful occurrences that he could not find time. And now he was in jail.

When his period of incarceration began, he decided to write her. He apologized for his failure to call and offer his sympathy, told her of his imprisonment and ended the letter thus:

"It seems that the fates have decreed that I should spend a good portion of my existence in prison in order to satisfy the penalties for other people's crimes. For I assure you that my present confinement is as unwarranted and unjust as was my detention in England, and many times more galling."

One noon as the deputy sheriff brought Paul his midday meal, Paul asked his old friend to advise him.

"Barney," he said, "I feel that we are not making as thorough preparations for the fight as we should, to assure us of winning. The other side is working overtime and will leave nothing undone in order to carry the day. There are several legal questions with which I want to become familiar. I want to consult John Morris in his office, this evening, and to see his law library. Can we fix it?"

"But his Onner said imprishonment meant imprishonment," replied Barney, raising his brows.

"Yes, I understand," nodded Paul. "It would be a little irregular, I know, and disrespectful to the Court. However, I have the reputation already, so perhaps it won't matter. That's why he put me here. But I am entitled to be in John Morris' office, to-night, Barney, for I am here wrongfully. The Court cannot see it, or know it, but in my heart I know it. This wrong, unintentionally imposed upon me by the Court, and intentionally forced upon me by my enemies, has given them a great advantage in this case. It may win it for them. And besides, Barney," and Paul smiled, "the court did not say where I should be imprisoned—it said I should be imprisoned, but the place was not mentioned, at least not in the orders to you. If I am confined in John Morris' office with doors locked and windows barred at your direction, I am just as much imprisoned there as I am here."

Barney's face had gradually taken on a quizzical expression. He now solemnly winked his left eye and then declared oracularly:

"In the absence of the Court, his Onner, Oi shall rule that ye be confoined in John Morris' office, at hard labor, to-night, for a period of four hours, and yir sentence to begin promptly whin thu town clock shall shtrike the 'our ov sivven. Oi will go now and see that thu prishon is prepared to receive ye," and Barney again solemnly winked as he locked the cell door. He tiptoed down the corridor and then returned and again winked solemnly. Then he whispered:—

"Sure that's a head ye have on yer shoulders, Paul!"

Paul and Barney engaged in a whispered conference, during the course of which Barney emitted a series of stupendous chuckles. He finally emitted such a guffaw of laughter as to make the cell ring. Then winking solemnly again, he went away. At a quarter before seven, Barney again appeared.

"Now, me lad," he prompted in a loud whisper.

"If anyone calls, tell them that I cannot, under any circumstances, see them to-night," said Paul very loudly.

"Sure, ye air a mighty sick man! Afflicted with an awful headache! Too bad, too bad!"

"Barney, you fix up a dummy or something, so that my cot will appear to be occupied," whispered Paul.

"Jist lave that to me, lad—Oi'll take care ov it."

Thereupon Paul walked out, closing the grated door behind him. Barney rolled up some blankets and placed them under the covering, raising the quilts at the pillow so that the cot had every appearance of being occupied. He had completed the arrangements and stepped to the door to leave, when to his surprise he found it locked. The fastening was one of those spring contrivances that was self-locking when the door closed, and the only way to unlock it was with a key inserted from the outside. Barney could plainly see that the key still remained in the lock, but try as he might, he could not possibly reach it. He would have to wait until Paul returned.

"Well," said the deputy sheriff to himself, "menny a one hev Oi locked up in me day, but this is the foist time Oi ivver ben me own prishoner," and he chuckled. But his mirth was of short duration, for at that instant he heard footsteps coming toward him on the cement floor of the jail corridor. For a moment he was undecided as to just what to do. Then he went to the cot, sat down on the edge of it, and engaged in a conversation with a pretended occupant. The discussion was quite one-sided, but this was not so singular with Barney, for such conditions had often existed, even when he had a real auditor.

The advancing footsteps were those of the court-house janitor. He was no friend of the deputy sheriff. He stopped at the cell, peered in, and surveyed the situation.

"Barney, is Mr. Nehring there?" he asked.

"Well if he wasn't, where could he be?" replied the deputy sheriff, sarcastically.

"There's a young lady up-stairs that wants to see him."

"Not much—didn't ye knew that he's awful sick?" replied Barney; and then he went through a number of pretentious acts, placing the covering carefully about his supposed patient. "Air ye feelin' betther now?" he said as he leaned over near the pillow. "Ye air too warm? Well then, Oi'll fan ye," and he seized a newspaper and quickly improvised a fan, which he used on the suffering patient, vigorously.

"Barney," continued the janitor, in a low tone of voice, evidently so that the sick man would not hear, "I'll tell her she can't see him, that he's very sick and in awful shape."

"That's it exactly!" said Barney. "She can come to-morrow." And then placing his hand to the side of his mouth, he continued, also in a low tone of voice, "He'll do well if he pulls through the night."

At the latter remark, the janitor became alarmed. He did not know before that Paul was so sick. He hurried up the stairs to the lady who was waiting, and informed her, in his simple way, that Paul was "in awful shape," and that he would be lucky if he "pulled through the night."

At this information, the lady became very excited indeed. It was no other personage than Edith Price. She exclaimed vigorously. "But I must see him, I tell you, I must see him!"

The janitor, who was a romantic soul despite his prosaic occupation, was so impressed that he once more sought out Barney, still fanning that which most certainly could not "pull through the noight."

"The lady says she won't be put off! She says she's got to see him!" the janitor whispered excitedly as he peered through the bars. Barney returned the gaze with a very marked frown upon his countenance.

"It's yer dooty to kape her away, Oi tell ye," he began, testily, but before he could finish, the janitor glanced around and exclaimed: "There she comes now!" He vanished promptly, for he did not propose to take any further chances with Barney's wrath.

To say that Barney was excited would be putting it mildly. And when Edith Price looked through the bars, he was mumbling to his pretended patient, and bending over, close to the pillow.

"Pardon me, sir, but is Mr. Nehring very ill?" she inquired.

"Yes, leddy, he is very low," he replied as he turned his face toward her, and pretended to look serious. But the artificial seriousness mixed with his naturally excited condition, gave his countenance a really foolish expression.

Edith noticed it, but she misconstrued it for an evidence of guilt on the part of the gentleman, whoever he was. She promptly concluded that he had in some manner committed an act of violence upon Paul, and now, in a more rational period, was evidently trying to do all he could for his victim. But if that were so, she must placate him.

"Perhaps I can be of some assistance," she said sweetly. "I have done some nursing in England. If you let me in, I may be able to help you."

"No, no, leddy!" replied Barney, beads of perspiration starting out on his forehead. "He must not be disturbed." And then to his patient, "A glass of wather ye want? Oi'll git it fer ye." He went to the table on which there was a glass, but it was empty, and no water in sight! Not even a pitcher to get it!

"Let me get the water for you," exclaimed Edith.

"No, no, leddy! Oi told you he must not be dishturbed," replied the now thoroughly worried deputy, as he returned to the cot, sat upon the edge of it, and bent over low. "Ye don't want enny? No?" in a pretentious manner. "He says he don't want enny wather, jist now, leddy." And he looked at her again, with an expression he intended to be serene, but which actually was that of a badly frightened jack rabbit.

Edith knew now that something was wrong.

A child could have seen that the gentleman's conversations were one-sided, and that the occupant of the cot had not said a word. Could the man be a maniac? He seemed harmless, though. Even as the thought flashed through her mind she noticed that the key was in the lock, and while Barney was still mumbling and bending low, she promptly turned the key, stealthily entered the cell and stood directly at his side.

She understood the situation, instantly! And when the deputy sheriff turned his head, he was dumbfounded to find that he was looking up into a face upon which a slow smile was dawning. Barney's jaw dropped. Finally, he fell upon his knees before her, and stretched forth his hands in a suppliant attitude.

"Me leddy, ye will forgive me! He ain't sick at all—at all! Oi was jist foolin' ye! But the poor lad had an important cais a comin' on and he needed to be a studyin' of it with his lawyer, and oi let him out! Ye won't tell on me, will ye?" he begged. "Oi hev nivver did a thing loike this before in all me loife, but the poor lad's misfortune got the best ov me betther nature! Oi plead with ye, leddy, that ye won't give me away and ruin me good name and shpoil me future?" And he took hold of her hand.

Edith had an almost irresistible temptation to laugh, but, realizing that the funny Irishman was certainly Paul's friend, she controlled herself.

"Don't worry, officer," she said. "I'm sure you've done this to help Paul, I mean Mr. Nehring, and I won't say a word about it to anyone, I promise you."

"Oi thank ye, leddy, Oi thank ye!" repeated the now thoroughly abashed Barney. "Blessins on yer purty face. Oi'm thinkin', he'll be sorry he wasn't sick!"

And as Edith, blushing, retreated from the cell, Barney bowed lower and lower, repeating,

"Oi thank ye, leddy. Oi thank ye!"

CHAPTER XX

WHICH CIVILIZATION?

PAUL and John Morris were busily engaged in the details of the pending law-suit, when the office-door opened quickly, and Barney Flynn, the deputy sheriff, burst in upon them, his countenance a picture of woe.

"Do ye know the name ov a young leddy with dark hair and big eyes, and what looks awful swate, and who might be a callin' on ye?" Barney demanded promptly, looking into Paul's face earnestly.

At this singular inquiry, both Paul and Mr. Morris broke into a hearty laugh. But the deputy sheriff's countenance never lightened, it became only more woe-begone.

"Was she dressed in dark clothing?" inquired Paul.

"Ye're rite, and she said she knowed somethin' about nursing'; learnt it in England."

"Yes," answered Paul, "I know her. She is the ammunition agent's niece, and stays at the hotel with his family."

"Er—What! Say that again!" And Barney

caught Paul by the hand, both his mouth and his eyes opening wide in astonishment.

"I said," rejoined Paul, suppressing a smile, "that she is the ammunition agent's niece."

At this startling information, Barney dropped into a chair, his arms dangling, his head bent forward, an expression of desolation on his countenance.

"She'll tell him! And he's agin ye, Paul, and he'll be agin us both. I kin see me finish, now! I'll lose me job and me reputation, too! And the court will send ye up for loife, sure."

John Morris and Paul could no longer restrain their laughter, but Barney appeared so completely flabbergasted, that finally he elicited their sympathy.

"And Oi told her the whole ov it! What a fool Oi be. But she promised not to tell! Do you think she'll keep her word?" he asked pitifully.

"Yes," answered Paul, "if she told you she would keep a secret, you can rest assured that the information is safe from Sir William, and the whole world, so far as she is concerned."

Reassured by Paul's confident words, Barney finally told them what had transpired. They listened intently as he told his story and he was frequently interrupted by fits of laughter from his two auditors. After he had finished, he added:

"And would ye belave it, Oi nivver wint down on me knees before in all me loife fer enny woman—exceptin' the late Mrs. Flynn, before she was Mrs. Flynn. But she's a moighty swate girrul, even if she be related to that ammynishun agent. And if Oi war as young as ye air, Paul—instid uv an ould baldheaded widower—Oi'd git down on me knees to her agin! Indade Oi would! And Oi'd take her away from that Sir William. And he'd be one of me woif's relatives that Barney Flynn would nivver recognize, aither." And he assumed a dignified attitude.

The deputy sheriff had scarcely concluded, when a gentle knock sounded on the door. John Morris asked Paul to step into the adjoining room. Mr. Morris then opened the entrance door. To his surprise, and Barney's consternation, in walked Sir William Price, the ammunition agent.

"May I have a few moments, privately, with you?" he inquired of the attorney. Mr. Morris placed a chair for his visitor near the desk, and Sir William sat down. The deputy sheriff was about to depart when Mr. Morris said to him in an undertone, "I want you to remain, Barney." And then the lawyer took his accustomed place back of the desk.

Mr. Morris knew that Woodruff and his supporters had trumped up the charges against his young client, which had finally landed him in jail.

He felt that in dealing with men capable of going to such lengths, it was wiser to talk only in the presence of a witness. Sir William glanced around, saw that Barney had seated himself near the door and showed some slight annoyance. He did not like the situation. He knew that Morris had requested the deputy sheriff to remain, but he determined to affect a diplomatic ignorance of the fact.

However, in the distinguished attorney, he soon found his equal in both diplomacy and shrewdness. Not that John Morris, as a diplomat, would have employed the same methods or have done the same things. But his experiences along that line, his extensive knowledge of human nature, and his active participations in varied affairs of men, eminently qualified him to know the game. He was, therefore, in a position to anticipate, almost invariably, each move of his adversary.

The purpose of Sir William's visit was to procure a settlement, if possible, of the pending suit —favorable, of course, to his side. The attitude of the general public upon the munition question had demonstrated itself contrary to his liking; and he was personally really afraid to have the case go to trial. He had determined, therefore, to bear every argument, inducement, and even threats, to bring about a satisfactory compromise.

" I have wanted to talk with you, Mr. Morris, ever since I met you a few days ago, but business kept me from it," he began in his easy, pleasantly modulated voice. " I have been told that you have been in the consular service and you are, therefore, probably more conversant with foreign affairs than is the average man. I hope your interest has been such that you have kept in touch with recent events in international matters.

" To a certain extent, I have," replied Morris. " But you overestimated my familiarity. My career in the consular service was quite brief."

" Even so," replied Sir William," your studies along that line have shown you the general tendencies of the civilization of your own country, in comparison with that of others."

" I am familiar with international affairs, at least," rejoined John Morris.

" But your country's civilization, and mine, have so many ideals and institutions in common, that a knowledge of one must necessarily include a knowledge of the other. I find you Americans very open and very receptive—though not more so perhaps than we are ourselves, for we have taken many suggestions from your country and your great men and have applied them. Today, we applaud the mistake that King George made, which resulted in your famous Declaration of Independence—for we have, long since, adopted its paramount doctrines bodily," went on Sir William.

"My forefathers on both my mother's and father's side, helped set forth those doctrines. We weren't selfish—we gave them to the world," smiled Morris.

"But the whole world has not adopted them. For instance, our two largest adversaries in this fight," exclaimed Sir William quickly, "do not recognize those doctrines in principle. There is not the individual freedom in Germany and Austria that exists in either your country or mine. With them, it is still in the air, so to speak. Everything is the government, the individual units receive but little recognition."

The object of the munition agent's visit was now quite clear to John Morris—his caller was trying to win his regard, in order to influence the case. But carefully as Sir William had planned his conversation, flattering as he made the personal application of his remarks, subtly as he led up to his points, his task was a vain one. Morris was a hard man to read, and Price recognized that he would have to depend from now on upon the occasion, the development of the situation at the time, and his own resources, as to just what method he would pursue to gain his end. Shrewd, unscrupulous, and diplomatic, he was ready to employ any means—to appeal to Morris' patriotism, his manhood, his prejudices if necessary, even, as a last resort, to play upon that love of money which he believed latent in every man. The Englishman was well aware of the great influence that John Morris had over his client, the leader of the opposition forces, and if he could sway John Morris, he believed that he could control the situation.

To Sir William's last remark, Morris answered:

"But the basic distinctions of that Declaration of Independence, which characterized the American system of government and made it separate and distinct from any other government then known, are but two: a recognition of the fact that all men are created equal, and that they have the right of self government. You may have applied these principles in England, but you have not applied them in Ireland, or in many of your colonial possessions. I cannot agree with your assertion that your country has adopted them in principle; you have respected them, partially, in practice."

"But I think you will agree with me, Mr. Morris, that there is no country in the world—unless it be your country—where there is so much individual liberty as in mine, where men are so free to follow their own inclinations, where individualism is so respected.

John Morris smiled a little wearily. "One hears so much of individual freedom," he rejoined, "and so little of individual responsibility. Individualism needs checks, otherwise it may become license. I fear that in your country, as well as in mine, oftentimes we have allowed individualism to run riot with direful results. Too much individualism, like too much government, is bad. The greatest danger that confronts your country to-day, Sir William, is not invasion by a German army— for if they succeeded in crossing the channel, and in traversing the whole of the islands, their damages would be but temporary— but the invasion of individualism. Look what it has done already! Unbridled industrial greed has created a political system—and slums that for degeneracy and filth are unparalleled anywhere in the world. It will take generations for you to undo the harm your rampant individualism has already done in the last few decades. And my country is following, in that respect, your footsteps. Unchecked individualism, greedy and selfish, is the gravest danger with which my own land is confronted. The adversaries you speak of, especially Germany, seem to have combined individualism and communism so as to produce striking results. Where can you parallel the well-being and contentment of the German people, as a whole. So far, this war has clearly demonstrated that your German adversary consists of millions upon millions of exceedingly intelligent, robust, contented, and yet idealistically patriotic men and women. That is the reason, Sir William, why your fight is so hard. The German government has looked after every class of its people, as a parent looks after his child. After all, the real strength of any nation lies in the intelligence and contentment of its citizens. Even your country and mine can still learn lessons of government, and apply them, too, without relinquishing any of those great doctrines that my country originally set forth to the world."

Morris suddenly paused. His sincerity had betrayed itself in greater length of speech than he anticipated, and he broke off abruptly out of deference to his visitor. The latter seemed somewhat amazed by the lawyer's warmth of utterance, but he replied promptly.

" But," he said, " the inter-change of ideas, the similarity of our governments, the great body of laws that you Americans have adopted from our system, establish a co-ordinate civilization that must necessarily make us stand together when that civilization is attacked. Your people cannot help but feel interested on our side in the progress of the conflict! "

" We are more interested in its stopping, than in its continuance," replied Morris briefly.

"We cannot stop until we have settled the issues," promptly retorted Sir William. "Either the Central Powers must be crushed, or England and her allies. We cannot lay down our arms until they have been properly subdued, so that they will never dare to arise in arms again. Between the two civilizations, Mr. Morris, frankly, which do you yourself favor?" John Morris smiled a moment. Then he answered gravely:

"But the Allies' cause is represented by a motley crew. Which one of the various civilizations so interested in your side, will you put forth as first and foremost, Sir William? When you have crushed the Central Powers what will you do? Dismember them? How far into Germany and Austria will you permit Russian civilization to extend? How far Italian or Balkan? How much of them will go to France, and what part will be set aside for the sphere of British influence? And will you ask your Oriental ally, Japan, to participate also? Personally, I cannot see how the world at large is going to gain by halting the progress and development of the German nation and giving in exchange such a substitute?"

"We will admit the Germans have made great progress in many lines," answered Price. "But the Teutonic race is a warlike race—they are militaristic, and militarism menaces the world."

"Yes," emphasized Morris, "militarism must be crushed. The nations that foster it are doomed eventually."

Sir William had been persistently parrying for an opening. He believed now that he had found the weak spot—John Morris' opposition to large military establishments. But with all his shrewdness, Morris was actually feeling him out, not revealing his own hand. The lawyer was setting a trap and making the path to it clear and easy.

"For that reason alone, Mr. Morris, as your country and mine are opposed to militarism, we should stand together." Sir William snapped his answer up hurriedly, like a dog a bone. "You should not, as an American patriot, as a conscientious citizen of the world, hamper in any way our efforts to overcome the enemy. When we shall have conquered, the world will have universal peace. That warlike race must be subdued."

Sir William's voice rang out on the last words like a trumpet call. But John Morris, much to his chagrin, seemed cool and altogether lacking in enthusiasm. The baronet's ardor was still further cooled by John Morris' first words.

"I am not so certain that the warlike race you speak of, the Teutons, are any more aggressive in that respect, than some of the other races of

Europe—or even as much," he said slowly. "I draw my conclusions about them as a race as I know them and from the sources of history to which I have access. We have many of these Teutons in our own land. They and their descendants number many millions. I know many, and find them home-loving, docile, industrious, not addicted to taking the initiative in trouble-making, but opposed to it generally. They will stand considerable imposition, but when once thoroughly roused, they will fight for their rights. As to German aggressions in history, the Empire kept the peace of Europe for more than forty-three years. In this century, she has had no wars—except the present one. This cannot be said of any of her adversaries, some of whom have had several. In the last half of the last century, Germany has waged but three wars, one at least of which was forced upon her.

"Louis Napoleon was the aggressor in 1870, and not the German federation. During the same half century, your country, Great Britain, waged many wars—some forty in all. As a student of history, I cannot agree with your theory that the Teutonic race is more aggressively militaristic than the others."

"But her ability to meet the exigencies of this war," rejoined Sir William, "shows that Germany had made great military preparations beforehand, that she had incurred great military and naval expenditures, and burdened her people. It is these extensive preparations on her part that have menaced the peace of Europe."

"When did Germany spend more for army and naval purposes than did your country, Sir William?" rejoined Morris. "The fact of the matter is that she has been spending much less for such purposes than any of her chief adversaries. For instance, in the year 1913–14, before the war, Great Britain expended on her army and navy one hundred and fifty-four millions of dollars more than did Germany for the same purposes; Russia one hundred and forty-five millions more, and France sixteen millions more than did the great militaristic nation that you mention. Even the United States," he continued, "spent on its navy twenty-nine millions of dollars more than did Germany on her navy, during the same period of time. And so far as the menace of standing armies is concerned, at the beginning of this war Russia had a standing army nearly twice the strength of that of Germany; France not quite as large in numbers but forty per cent larger according to population; and the combined standing armies of England and her allies were nearly three times as large as that of Germany and Austria together. And the navies of the Entente Allies combined were in the same proportion. So far as military establishments are concerned, armies and navies, and military and naval expenditures, no more blame can be placed upon the Central Powers than upon any of the others. They are all equally guilty of too much militarism. They are all too prone to settle their differences by force, rather than by reason."

Sir William was making but little progress. His line of arguments did not get very far with Morris, lawyer and student of history. Yet what he had been saying formed the substance of the most widely read editorials in the daily press.

"But you do not agree with the great majority of the American people, and with the leading newspapers, who see in the triumph of Germany a real menace?" he asked.

"So far as the majority of the people are concerned, I believe my views accord with theirs," answered Morris sharply. "As to the editorials of many of the dailies, I confess that I cannot see the menace they do. Perhaps this is due to the fact that my viewpoint is different. French and British influences are patent in certain widely quoted newspapers, and these are very emphatic in their denunciations of militarism in Germany—but they extol the virtues of militarism in the United States, and scathingly condemn us because our establishments along such lines are not equal to those of Europe. Sir William, I most sincerely believe that the money trust is engaged in pulling off another loot. The subject matter of the loot, this time, is one that reeks with human blood—the enormous profits that go with the commerce in death-dealing instruments. The money trust always has a goodly number of mouth-pieces to espouse its cause. I do not blame your country and her allies, who have a shrewd coterie at work; it is a part of the business of war. But I do hold responsible their many dupes. Your agents have played upon the love of money of large numbers of manufacturers and financiers until their consciences have become so benumbed that they can see no wrong in taking money in exchange for human lives. Financiers have made millions out of the business. But murder under the moral law will out, and some day these men will regret their deeds. They will not only suffer the ostracism of enlightened and moral people, but retributive justice will meet them somewhere, somehow. That has been the fate of such men since Cain slew Abel.

Sir William had listened in growing indignation. His voice rose in anger as he answered:

"Your argument, Mr. Morris, is farfetched. This munition business is a legitimate one, and it has brought millions upon millions of dollars to your land.

"It will do us no good! It is blood money! We have paid too high a price for your gold," retorted the lawyer. "Besides, you are not only asking us to furnish the necessary instruments of death, but you now demand that the American people purchase it for you with their own money."

Sir William's face grew red with ill-suppressed rage, and his voice was well-nigh contemptuous as he retorted.

"But do you not understand, can you not understand, that it is the enemies of civilization we shall fight to the bitter end, and over whom we shall triumph? We'll pay back every dollar that we borrow of your people!"

"If you fight to the 'bitter end,' I doubt it," replied the lawyer coolly. "For the 'bitter end' will be bitter indeed—an admixture of gall and wormwood at least. If Germany and Austria are finally prostrated—and that eventuality appears to be further away now than it was a year ago—your own country and her associates in interest will be so exhausted that it will require a considerable period of time for reconstruction. They have borrowed of their own financiers about all they will stand. It is quite natural that the home lenders will want their pay first—it will not be the first time in history that a European nation has repudiated its obligations.

"With a billion dollars of such promises to pay on our hands, the failure to meet an interest payment, or even the apparent prostration of your country when you shall have fought to the 'bitter end,' would create a panic in this country and shake its financial foundations. Regardless of the immorality and un-neutrality of it in fact, the people have been asked to participate in this loan in order that the money trust may be paid its millions in profits out of the arms and ammunition traffic. Your countries are evidently in a bad way financially, or you wouldn't be asking for the loan. The money trust knows that you cannot buy guns and ammunition readily, and consequently cannot realize its unscrupulous gains unless the American people now furnish the money for such purposes and take in exchange your promise to pay in the future. The half billion dollars you have gotten from us has not whipped the Germans and Austrians. When it is all gone, and the enemy is still unsubdued you will come back and want a billion more. And as a lever with which to pry loose the billion, you will claim it is imperatively necessary in order to save the first half billion."

Sir William began to smile superciliously. "I am greatly surprised, Mr. Morris," he said banteringly. "Your lack of confidence in our abilities, in our great resources, in my people, and those of our allies, might be understood in a man who had few opportunities to travel. Rather than repudiate one dollar of the money we may borrow, or the interest, we would prefer to live on husks, on black bread, until it shall have been paid."

"If you fight to the 'bitter end,' I fear that even black bread will be a luxury," replied Mr. Morris. "I do not doubt the good intentions on your part, but when men are engaged in a fight they are liable to overestimate their abilities—to be blinded by their passion of hate, as our financiers are blinded by their passion for gold. The question is, whether the American people will allow their financial system to be prostituted to those ends in the face of such insanities. And again, it is indeed difficult to speculate as to what the political situations will be in the various countries in Europe when the conflict shall finally cease. The people may take a direct hand. They may decide that the burden is too great to bear. They may yet see this munition question in its true light, namely, that by our providing steady supply, we prolonged the war and thus brought greater calamities upon them—heartlessly and shamefully."

Sir William arose angrily as if to leave; started for the door and then turned back and reseated himself. "It seems, Mr. Morris, that there is very little that you and I entertain in common," he began. "I doubt neither your sincerity, nor your patriotism, although I cannot agree with you in many of your conclusions. Your knowledge and experiences have made you a distinguished counsellor. My young friend, Paul Nehring, was quick to recognize your merit, and I am glad to know that you are the attorney on the other side of the pending suit. You have doubtless discovered in your legal practice that as a rule it is more satisfactory to compromise a law-suit and settle it out of court, rather than fight it in court.

"Knowing the great weight and influence that you have with Mr. Nehring, to be plain with you, I am here to ascertain if a settlement of the suit can be effected. Your young client has already been the recipient of too much court publicity, for which I am truly sorry, and my offer will save him further embarrassment in that respect. We are willing to buy his stock, as well as that of his associates, at a reasonable figure. This will allow the plant to be reopened at once, and I shall, in any event, insist upon the prompt fulfilling of my ammunition contracts."

"I have no authority to speak for Mr. Nehring and his associates in interest," replied the lawyer. "I was retained to defend this suit—not to sell their stock. I agree with you that it is usually advisable to compromise differences out of court, if it can be done. In this case I am certain that the defendants will never consent to a sale of their stock. A principle is involved, and I am confident that they will never recede from their position.

"But they would, if you advised them to do so."

"I cannot so counsel them. It would be a violation of the trust they repose in me."

"I think you will concede that the young man, the leader of the opposition, is prompted by a foolish sentimentalism—his professed ammunition scruples—wholly without reason and contrary to international practices. His efforts at preventing the fulfillment of the contracts come dangerously near constituting treason to his country. It assumes an international bearing, and might embroil the nation in a serious breach of neutrality."

John Morris brushed aside the suggestion with an amused smile.

"There are many who believe our neutrality has already been breached on the one side; a breach on the other side would tend to even up the score," was all he said.

"Then you approve of violations of neutrality?" asked Sir William perplexedly.

"I do not! On the contrary I believe in being neutral, in fact and not in name only. If we were neutral in fact, you would not be here even to argue the question," retorted the attorney.

"But this is a serious matter, Mr. Morris," exclaimed the baronet.

"For once, you and I agree," replied the other. "When organized government will allow its citizens to create new industries for making arms and ammunition for one side of a fight, and convert even its plow factories to the same ends, it is indeed a serious matter."

"Your position, however, is wrong," said Sir William. "Your government is not trafficking in the commodities—it simply lets its citizens do so if they wish, and they can sell to whoever desires to purchase. It is no business of the government to ascertain who is buying, or to determine the quality. It looks neither to the one side nor to the other. Moreover it would be a breach of neutrality for your government to exclude us now, when the fight is on: We relied on our rights under international practices."

"But my nation has several times prohibited the munition traffic altogether," replied John Morris. "About two years ago, our government stopped the shipment of munitions to Mexico, because it was said that only the one side in the conflict then raging was receiving the benefit of the traffic, and that furnishing one side to the exclusion of the other would constitute a breach of neutrality. Our government looked to both sides then, but apparently sees one side, now. Here is the President's address as delivered in Congress on August 27, 1913, concerning neutrality in the Mexican situation." He produced from a pigeon hole in his desk a copy of the Congressional Record. "Let me read you in part what he said at that time:

> "'I deem it my duty to exercise the authority conferred upon me by the law of March 14, 1912, to see to it that neither side to the struggle now going on in Mexico receive any assistance from this side of the border. I shall follow the best practice of nations in the matter of neutrality, by forbidding the exportation of arms or munitions of war of any kind from the United States to any part of the Republic of Mexico—a policy suggested by several interesting precedents, and certainly dictated by many manifest considerations of practical expediency.'

"Sir William, if this country is bound to furnish your nation and her allies with these death-dealing-devices, certainly you have already received more than your share, for we have already provided you with billions of dollars' worth of munitions. We have in the past on a number of occasions placed embargoes and removed embargoes. We have also, during the continuance of wars, changed our laws relating to neutrality, and no one has ever asserted before that such acts would constitute a breach of neutrality. I realize that is the stock argument of the money trust that is manipulating the arms and ammunition traffic. They are loud in declaiming that to prevent the business would be unneutral and likely to embroil us in the war. Their patriotism is based purely on the fabulous profits they get out of this traffic."

"However, you forget, Mr. Morris, that the right of citizens in a declared neutral country, to furnish belligerents with such commodities, is founded upon sound public policy," retorted Sir William angrily.

"I must differ from you again," replied Morris. "No sound public policy, or national virtue, can be based upon a pretended right of its citizens to help kill human beings, wherever the victims may be. Not one of these traffickers in arms and ammunition—not even Woodruff—would want the responsibility of such partnership in the destruction of human life, were it not for the profit in it. The practice is a relic of a semi-barbarous age. It shocks the moral sense to even contemplate it."

"But you fail to distinguish that there is a vast distinction, Mr. Morris, between legal neutrality and actual neutrality. The practices of nations have established the legal neutrality principles.

It is legal neutrality that concerns us, not the other."

"I concede" said Morris, "that there seems to be a vast difference in its interpretation, now. In the past, there was a close relationship between legal neutrality and actual neutrality—actual neutrality was, in fact, the essence of legal neutrality. By our present attitude in this war, we virtually deny that any relationship exists between the two, that legal neutrality is at least a first cousin of belligerency. It requires no genius to discover our lack of actual neutrality in this way. If two boys were engaged in a fight, and you, as a third party, employed the same tactics in their altercation and called yourself neutral, you would receive the ridicule of the one and the contempt of the other. Our attitude in this war has no precedent in history."

"But," rejoined Sir William, "I contend that the right of citizens of a neutral nation to provide arms and ammunition is established clearly by international usages, and is sound to the core in principle. If we could not depend upon citizens of neutral nations to furnish us, it would require great military establishments in each country. Speaking for my own country, we had a right to rely on international law and upon the citzens of neutral countries. In fact we did so depend, especially upon the United States."

"You have no right to expect that we would enlarge our ammunition plants in order to supply that demand, or to establish new industries along that line. You had no right to expect us to convert our plow factories and other peaceful industries into arsenals, and divert our great resources, to help you win a war. There is nothing in international practices, in the past, to warrant any such expectations."

Sir William smiled.

"Suppose the case were reversed. You must concede that if citizens of your nation were not allowed to sell these things to us, in case your country should be at war in the future the same treatment would be accorded you, and citizens of neutral countries at the time could not sell to your country. That would mean that the United States must provide great military stores of arms and ammunition and other supplies, and have them on hand at all times. It would be a continuous burden on the people. Small nations would be bankrupted in carrying the load."

"I admit," John Morris answered, "that on the face of it, the argument appears to have merit, but a close inspection reveals its fallacies. To begin with, the practice is morally wrong at its base—that alone ought to be sufficient to condemn it. But let us see how it would work out in practice, as a policy upon which to build our hopes in case of war. There is no doubt that if we should declare war, with our wonderful resources we would be able to produce great quantities of military supplies of all kinds within a few months after such declaration. Our greatest concern, then, would be our supplies and equipment during the first few months. Let us assume that when war is declared we have but few supplies on hand—a few guns and a few rounds of ammunition. Let us assume that our adversary is Great Britain. With her superior fleet, we should soon be cut off from the military stores of practically the rest of the world. Our position would be the same as that of Germany and Austria to-day. Consequently we would have to depend wholly upon our own resources. But the rule we are asserting in the present war would work against us. For having asserted that citizens of neutral nations may sell to belligerents, we being cut off from such sources, our adversary would be able to throw against us not only his own forces of arms but the military equipments of all the rest of the world. When you consider that arms and ammunition in the present war have become relatively of greater importance than formerly—even in comparison with wars but a few years ago—to be thus severed from the rest of the world clearly establishes the injuries of the rule in such instance.

"If other European Powers declared war against us," Mr. Morris continued, "and they possessed jointly a superior fleet, the result would be the same. Or if a single European Power should war with us, and that Power possessed even a somewhat inferior fleet, its proximity to the other European nations with their great military stores would give our adversary a great advantage over us. It would not be within our power to cross the seas and isolate him by both land and water. Again the rule would really work against us.

"As to the small nation, it would invariably be its doom, for the large opposing nation would cut off its supplies, and throw against it the arms of the rest of the world—just as was done with the Boers. Those valiant peoples were holding their own against your country, Sir William, until she turned against them the guns of the neutral world, and they succumbed. The only instance when the rule works with any degree of fairness is when both sides have equal access to the military stores and resources of the neutrals, for then the shots and shells and other equipments furnished to the one side by neutrals, offset or neutralize the same kinds of supplies furnished to the other side.

"The net result of the fair working of the rule is, therefore, of really no advantage in the war. The noticeable result, however, is the killing, wounding and maiming of additionally large numbers on both sides, by reason of such excessive furnishing of military equipments by neutrals. Hence the excessively large numbers of widows and orphans in all of the belligerent countries. The practical application of the rule, therefore, in its results is in every instance either unjust as between the parties or exceedingly evil in the effects produced.

"In the present instance, by our furnishing such supplies to the Allies, we are prolonging the war, with the effect that not only will more Germans and Austrians be exterminated, crippled and maimed, but at least an equal number on the other side will suffer the same fate."

"But if such supplies could not be procured from neutral nations, you must admit that each nation would be required to keep on hand at all times large military stores and equipments," argued Sir William. "Moreover, each nation would then be an armed camp, always, and the evils resulting would be greater than the evils of neutrals selling to belligerents."

"Again I must differ with you, Sir William," replied the lawyer. "So far as my own country is concerned, I would consider it criminal negligence if we should depend, to any great extent, upon securing supplies from the outside world in case of war. We will be derelict in duty if we do not have on hand a sufficient quantity of military equipment and supplies to meet the first emergencies of a war, and until our undeveloped resources can be developed and utilized.

"I do not believe in burdening the people with militarism. Neither do I believe in being wholly unprepared, and I do not doubt that my country has been expending sufficient, and more too, to provide an adequate defense, providing we had gotten our money's worth. In the past, our contracts for supplies have been extravagant, to say the least. We have paid fabulous prices for what we received, and the quality of the product was oftentimes exceedingly inferior. The system employed, and the enormous profits involved, have resulted in building up several arrogant concerns always keen for more contracts.

"If the government produced in its own factories its ammunition, guns, armor-plate and many other necessary equipments, we could have a sufficient supply on hand for such emergencies, at a reasonable cost. A few such government plants, properly placed over the country, would each be a nucleus around which we could quickly build in productive capacity in case of war. Furthermore, by the government owning and operating such concerns, we would take away from individuals the incentive to create war for profit. The war in Europe to-day, Sir William, exists largely because, in every country in Europe, before hostilities began, you had a war faction that profited by wars and preparations for wars. This instilled into the minds of the people, openly and covertly, fears and race hatreds. Upon such fears and such hates they builded the war. I confess that the same elements are now insidiously at work in my own land, and if, in the presidential chair, there were now a man of less poise, a man of less peaceful sentiments, we would long ago have spilled much of our blood and sacrificed great treasures in this European imbroglio.

" While we must at present still maintain military establishments, there is a tendency to make it really burdensome—to greatly prepare for contingencies that are improbable. It is certain that we need have no fears of a war with any European Power for some years to come. Our only danger, then, is Japan; but this is more fanciful than real. Moreover a too expensive preparation along military and naval lines, by us, is more likely to create suspicion in the eyes of the world that our professed peaceful sentiments are not genuine, and to have an exceedingly bad effect upon the efforts that are being put forth to establish a system by reason and justice, instead of force.

"Furthermore, the hundreds of millions we shall expend for arms and armament, preparing for this exceedingly remote contingency, will be money practically wasted, for in a few years these equipments will be obsolete and ready for the junk heap. Personally, I am not a believer in great military establishments with which to burden the people. Situated as we are, it is unnecessary. So far as my own country is concerned, we are spending enough now for such purposes. We should get more, however, for our money."

During the long conversation between John Morris and the ammunition agent, Barney Flynn, the deputy sheriff, was an interested listener. As the argument proceeded he kept hitching his chair closer and closer, until he, also, was at the desk, and near the visitor. Several times he was on the point of taking part in the discussion, but restrained himself with considerable difficulty. His lips moved, and he shifted uneasily in his chair. Finally he could contain himself no longer.

"Sir William!" said Barney, and bowed. "Be it not a fact that a nashun is jist a large family?"

That gentleman appeared amused at the question, and smiling, replied, "Yes, it is usually so regarded. It is a good comparison."

"And Oi agree with ye—it's thu way Oi regard it mesilf," Barney rejoined. "Would you belave it, only last week Oi had some nutrallity experiences, mesilf. Ye know, thu McCarthy family lives next door to me own premises, and the Jones'es jist across thu ally from thu McCarthys. Well, thu ither day thu two families got into an awful jangle—oh, they're a bad lot—thu ould folks and thu younger ones, they war all at it, a callin' each ither bad names, and ivverything they could lay their tongues on. Oi railly thought the whole matther would end afther their extended exchange ov compliments, but, somehow whin thu tension wuz purty high, one ov thim Jones'es brats, accidentally or itther-wise, fired a piece of barrel-stave across the ally—which was nootral territory—and it struck ould Mrs. McCarthy roit on thu nose, and the war immediately begun without enny ulthimatums from aither soide.

"And thin ivverything what was loose was a flyin' through thu air, from tomatho cans an' brick-bats to wash-boards an' fryin' pans. Oh, it wuz an awful toime! Well, now, in mi back yarrd Oi hev a very noice pile ov brick, and when thu battle was still a ragin', young McCarthy crawls ovvur thu fince an' helps himsilf to mi poile uv brick—thu rascal. An' I went to him an' Oi sez:

"'Hold on there, McCarthy, thim's mi own brick!' an' he sez:—

"'Oi know it; but we've got to have thim in thu foight—Oi'll pay ye fer ivvery one uv thim.'

"'No,' sez Oi, 'ye kant hev thim—Oi don't want me brick to be used that way.'

"And then he sez, 'Barney, do ye know ye're not noothral in this foight?'

"An Oi sez, 'Well, Oi ain't a helpin' thu ither soide, am Oi?'

"And he sez, 'Yes, ye air, Barney. Ye're givin' them thu advantage, 'cause ye don't give us thu brick. Oi kin prove it to ye, Barney, that ye're not nootral, fer the noospapers says thet if we didn't give the Allies guns an ammynishun, it would be a helpin' out thu Jarmuns, and it wouldn't be nootral. An' this case, Barney, is jist loike it, ixactly.'

"Well, Oi'll hev to give thu young upstart credit, he's a moighty bright lad, an' he's a ben a readin' thu noospapers, all roight; but Oi refused to give him thu brick, and then he got riled up and sassy, an' he sez:—

"'Barney, ye're not nootral, Oi tell ye—and Oi kin prove it agin by thu noospapers, fer it's yer dooty to give us thu brick, 'cause if ye don't, sometime when you git into a foight nobuddy will give ye enny brick, and so ye'll hev to have your back yarrd full ev brick all thu toime fer emergency.'

" And Oi confess he had good noospaper authority fer this argyment.

" But Oi couldn't see it quite thet way, so Oi picked him up an' pitched him ovvur thu fence —it wasn't legal nootrality maybe, but Oi did it ennyway. Oi then called to thu McCarthy to shtop their foightin', but they wouldn't do it; and Oi wint across thu ally an' told thu Jones'es to shtop their foightin', too, but they wouldn't listen, aither. And so Oi wint back and forth fer a spell an' tellin' 'em to quit and arbytrate the matther; and foinally, would ye belave it, Oi got thim to quit, and we patched up thu whole mess —a bit of blood shpilled, and some sure heads, but now they're gittin' along foine. Oh, Barney Flynn is some kind ov peace maker, even if Oi do say it."

And he straightened up to his full six feet and extended his chest.

" But supposin'," continued Barney, " that instead ov throwin' the young McCarthy rascal ovvur thu fince, Oi had a yelled to thu whole bunch to shtop their foightin', an' at the same toime continued to hand young McCarthy thu brick—would they have respicted mi request? No, and then there's a ben more blood shpilled and more broken heads then there wuz—it wuz bad 'nough ennway. And it seems to me that if your Uncle Sam as a peace maker would follow ould Barney Flynn's style, and when he tells thim Europeyan nashuns to shtop their foightin', if he would quit handin' thim the brick, maybe they would listen."

At this conclusion, John Morris laughed heartily, and even Sir William smiled, though faintly. He had failed miserably in his mission, and he knew it. The realization made him angry.

"It appears, Mr. Morris, that there is no alternative. We must settle this matter in court," he said.

"The situation still bears that aspect, I must confess," the attorney replied.

"You realize, do you not, that in this fight, the associated interests will stand back of Woodruff?" continued Sir William.

"Yes," rejoined Morris. "I fully expected those interests to render valuable assistance to your side of the case."

"Woodruff's attorneys arrive to-morrow. The New York bar and the Philadelphia bar will be represented," added Sir William.

"We shall be pleased to have them with us. We will make their visit as pleasant as possible," said Mr. Morris.

"As soon as they arrive, I shall take steps to recover damages under the ammunition contracts, either against the concern, or against your client, Paul Nehring, and his associates, as my counsel shall advise," Sir William's voice had a nasty snarl.

"But who will bring the suit?" inquired the attorney.

"I shall; the contracts are in my name," retorted the agent.

"You are buying the ammunition, then?"

"Yes."

"What personal use, if any, have you for such ammunition?"

"That is my own affair. It doesn't concern any other person what I do with it; I can use it for blasting purposes, if I so desire," retorted Sir William angrily.

"Yes, to raise hell with," affirmed Barney.

Sir William stared haughtily at this interruption and then went on, but with diminishd impressiveness:

"You can inform your young friend that I shall ask a hundred thousand dollars' damages at least. It will be the most expensive law-suit in his experience. I'll fight it to the end, and I'll have plenty of assistance, morally and financially. It will cost him and his satellites a pretty penny even to defend it. I'll bankrupt them all."

At that instant the door between the two rooms flew open, and a voice said firmly, "We'll spend every dollar we have to fight you, but not one penny to buy you off."

"You'll need every dollar of it, sir, mark my word." And Sir William took his sneering farewell.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRIAL

THE day arrived for the trial that would determine the control as well as the character of the output of The Central Plow Works Company; and Paul was still serving time. For fully five days, the Court and jury were occupied in the taking of evidence, and at each session the court-room was crowded with interested spectators. The case, with all its anterior setting became known far and wide, and the trial excited nation-wide interest.

The sheriff of the county was seemingly against Paul, prompted no doubt by his belief that the latter was really guilty of all the acts of malfeasance with which he was charged. The discovery of Paul in John Morris' office, at a time when he was supposed to be in jail—a fact made public immediately by Sir William Price—only increased the sheriff's conviction. Poor Barney came in for the full measure of his superior's displeasure.

True, the deputy sheriff explained that his charge was entitled to consult his counsel, and that Paul was, in fact, in the custody of the law, the deputy sheriff being present in person; but his superior did not accept the excuse as sufficient, and when both Woodruff and Price prevailed upon him to conduct Paul to the court-room at each session handcuffed, as a punishment for his recent act, the sheriff was only too willing to be persuaded.

Accordingly, at the opening of each of the two daily sittings, the sheriff marched Paul into the court-room with his wrists bound with handcuffs, and authoritatively removed them in the presence of all, the Court, the jury and audience. At first John Morris went to the judge and protested against the sheriff's public demonstrations with the shackles, the obvious purpose of which was to influence the jury. But the judge informed him that it was a matter resting entirely with the sheriff, and if that official believed it was necessary to so restrain his prisoner, while conducting him to and from the court-room, he had a perfect right to do so.

It proved to be a bungling piece of spectacular effect. It helped Paul more than it hurt him, and Woodruff's counsel caused the discontinuance of the practice after the second day. If the American people possess one virtue above all others, it is the spirit of fair play. It is true they may be prejudiced, and are seemingly unreasonable at times, through a misunderstanding of facts, but when an injustice is clearly apparent, they resent it, emphatically.

John Morris, assisted by Paul, were the only counsel appearing on behalf of the defendants, and, as one of the defendants, Paul did not deem it advisable to take a prominent part as an attorney in conducting the trial. Furthermore he had full confidence in the ability of the senior counsel.

Beside their local attorney, the plaintiffs were represented by a lawyer from New York and another from Philadelphia—each with shiny pate, dignified and learned, and each a distinguished corporation lawyer.

It was, indeed, a pleasure to meet these two attorneys, for, like all highly educated and well balanced men, they were not only resourceful and polished, but were, in fact, quite democratic in address and demeanor.

In the trial of the case—especially after the second day—they were exceedingly courteous and fair to the opposite side—and no doubt their broad-mindedness and abundant experience would naturally prompt them to such virtue. It is only the pettifogger who has surreptitiously assumed the rôle of lawyer who still carries his tirades and abuses into court.

Furthermore, extensive experience on behalf of their clients—who were almost invariably large corporations—and a realization that such clients go into court before the jury somewhat handicapped because they are corporations, had taught them that courtesy and fair play were necessary pre-requisites to overcome prejudices. In this case, particularly, it would not be amiss, for Woodruff had not shown any consideration toward the other side as almost everyone knew.

During the trial, while the two prominent lawyers exhibited much learning and practiced apparent good will toward the opposition, nevertheless there was an absence of something in the presentation of the plaintiffs side of the case that the acute observer might properly call a lack of sympathy. And this characteristic is frequently absent in lawyers who represent large and aggressive corporations; for their client, being, " invisible, intangible, and existing only in contemplation of law "—without soul and without conscience—they who represent them in the courts, year after year, finally view them in the light of a soulless and conscienceless being. Eventually such entity reflects itself into the mind and disposition of its representative. For, after all, whether small or great, we partake, in a measure, of our circumstances and surroundings in the development of mind and characteristics.

During the progress of the trial, at two different times, Paul observed Edith Price and her Aunt in the court-room. He had had no opportunity to talk with her, except on one occasion, since the time he left her that night at the Tremont, with a sprained ankle. She had come to his cell, the day after the notable meeting with Sir William Price and John Morris, and had talked with him for a few minutes through the bars.

She seemed truly sorry at his confinement, and expressed the hope that some time he would be able to prove that he was wrongfully incarcerated. She brought him a book, which she gave him for the purpose, as she said, " of whiling away your lonely hours."

He reminded her of Barney's disclosure of the affair at the cell, and said that he hoped and trusted she would keep it a secret. She seemed somewhat hurt, and replied, " Have you ever had occasion to doubt that I keep my pledges inviolate? "

He confessed he had not, and apologized to her for having failed to use language that would properly convey his thoughts, as she had evidently misunderstood him. He knew only too well the inviolable characteristic on her part, for he remembered distinctly the incident on the veranda overlooking the sea, when he felt and believed that her heart really belonged to him, but for her promise to another man.

On the fifth day of the trial, late in the afternoon, the taking of evidence was completed, and court adjourned with a declaration from the Judge that the arguments to the Judge would begin promptly at nine o'clock the next morning.

That night, as John Morris was returning home from his office, he was waylaid and assaulted, almost at his front gate, by two highway robbers, at least that was the report given to the public. He was found a half hour later, on the door-step, by members of his household in a semiconscious condition. A physician was hastily summoned and soon restored him to consciousness. If the object of his assailants was robbery, they did not accomplish their purpose, for nothing was missing from his person, not even a considerable sum of money that he carried.

As soon as he had regained his faculties he inquired of the physician if it would be possible for him to be out the following day. The latter shook his head. Even under the most favorable conditions, the lawyer could not leave his room for at least two weeks. His injuries were more severe than he really believed. He had been greatly weakened by loss of blood, and this, together with his advanced age, made the doctor fear serious complications.

John Morris realized the gravity of the situation, so far as the case was concerned, and he knew that in its present state, the court would not, and could not, adjourn the proceedings until he should recover. He immediately sent for the deputy sheriff in order to convey the necessary information and instructions to Paul.

That night Paul was in his cell, sitting on the cot, when Barney Flynn entered and told of John Morris' injuries, and incapacity to participate further in the trial. Had a thunderbolt come out of the clear sky, Paul could not have been more startled. He was anxious, not only for John Morris' welfare—for he regarded him as a son regards his father—but even more so as to the final result of the pending law-suit.

For a time the news stunned him. He was too bewildered to concentrate his thoughts. It was a critical stage of the case, and he had expected that on the morrow John Morris would sum up the evidence to the Jury, and deliver an address that would move them, even in the presence of the two distinguished visiting attorneys.

Finally the deputy sheriff handed Paul the senior counsel's brief of the law and the facts, which he had procured from the office, at Mr. Morris' request.

"Mishter Morris tould me to give ye this, said it would help to git th' situashion down straight in yer head, fer, sez he, it's too late to git annither lawyer in th' case, and that ye'll hev to foight it out with thim two eastern dooks, yersilf, and give thim a jolt when they ain't a lookin' fer it. Fer he sez ye'll win the case yet if ye'll jest keep up yer spunk, and tumble all over thim. And whin ye git thim down, make thim beg fer their very loife."

Paul knew that Mr. Morris had not told Barney all the things he said, and he guessed that the deputy sheriff had amended the instructions considerably in order to add an element of encouragement. But, despite his recognition of this, Barney's words served to recall Paul to himself, and he drew himself up with grim determination. He would not give up the battle, yet; he would make a last stand, regardless of consequences.

With his purpose fixed, he entered into a diligent study of the brief, and continued his preparation for the final conflict. When he retired, the gray dawn was glimmering through his window.

CHAPTER XXII

A FRAGMENT OF SHELL

PAUL had finished his breakfast and was still in his cell, waiting for court to convene, when the janitor brought him his morning's mail. One of the letters bore a foreign postmark. He tore it open, eagerly drew forth a letter, and carefully read its contents. As he did so, his face became drawn and pale, and his hand unsteady and when he had finished, the letter dropped to the floor. He sat gazing blankly before him, his face haggard in misery. And in this position the sheriff found him when he came to conduct him to the court-room. As he perceived Paul's apparently forlorn condition, for the first time since the trial began the official pitied him.

The suspicious attack on John Morris soon became generally known about the city, and when the court convened that morning, the Judge inquired of Paul as to what counsel would be substituted in place of that gentleman.

"It is too late to substitute anyone, I shall continue alone, under the circumstances, to represent my associates and myself," replied Paul.

"It is an unfortunate situation, as we depended on Mr. Morris. I shall, in a very feeble manner I fear, act in his stead."

Price looked at Woodruff, and the latter looked back with a knowing wink. One of the distinguished attorneys sat within the rail, his arms folded as he gazed at the ceiling, and on his countenance there was a placid expression of satisfaction. To say that Price and Woodruff were cheerful would be putting it mildly, for they were now confident of certain victory. In Woodruff's mind it was clear that these two legal lions would make short work of their single opponent, and, figuratively speaking, they would rend him limb from limb, and leave him helpless and gasping, while they secured the prey.

The court-room that morning was crowded to its full capacity. Paul glanced around at the sea of faces; way in the back he saw Edith and Aunt Flora. As the girl's eyes met his, she smiled but her expression soon faded into a serious pitying look, for she, too, realized the apparent hopelessness of his position.

The senior counsel for the prosecution, the gentleman from New York, opened the argument on behalf of the plaintiffs. His rhetoric was perfect, his address eloquent, and all through the morning, until after the noon hour, he continued his plea on behalf of his clients. Earnest and convincing, he held his auditors spellbound with his flow of oratory.

In closing he paid a high tribute to Paul's "good intentions," and then proceeded to expose, "his untenable position," as the learned gentleman put it. "For," he said, "as I look into the young man's countenance, I plainly see portrayed his high character, and I know his lofty purposes; but like many other men who have turned their faces toward the stars for inspiration, their thoughts are so far above this old earth of ours that they have severed themselves from its practical problems, and thus destroyed their usefulness in the present.

"We would hail the day when he might make practical his highest ideals—we would be pleased to know that men will war no more, and that arms and ammunitions are no longer useful; but the stern facts confront us that men do fight, and that nations do resort to armed conflicts, and as practical men, we must be equal to all exigencies. We cannot allow this well-intentioned but misinformed young man to go forth Don Quixote-like, fighting his windmills of fancy and imaginary wrongs to the extent that we may be involved in a serious breach of neutrality in the pending conflict."

After paying a high tribute to Woodruff, and after attempting to show that all proceedings relative to the last issue of stock were regular in every particular, he then went into the apparent underlying motives of the defendants.

"But this young defendant would not be in court to-day," he continued, "had he realized the full import of his acts. I deem it my duty, therefore, to disillusion him, bring him back to earth, and set him right in the ways of citizenship and true Americanism. His motive is quite plain. He would have us lend assistance to the one side of the conflict, to help out his German relatives and friends, by closing this factory to the manufacture of a product that it has already contracted to deliver to the other side of the contest. This brings us face to face with a serious international problem. You will do your duty as men. You will find a verdict for my clients."

When the court convened that afternoon, all eyes were turned toward the young defendant and attorney for the defense as he arose to reply. Whatever his inner feelings may have been, outwardly he appeared calm and confident.

He began his address by expressing regret that his senior counsel was incapacitated, and that the burden fell upon him, ill-prepared to assume such a responsible position, and unable to measure up in ability "to even the shoe-tops of the worthy gentleman who preceded me."

He then entered into a discussion of the evidence as to the illegal stock issue; he described how the records were doctored in order to show incidents and proceedings that never occurred, how Woodruff had always kept things in the dark, so that he could convert the plow factory into an ammunition concern, how he and his henchmen had held a rump stockholders' meeting, relying on such illegal shares of stock and basing their rights largely by virtue thereof.

Another issue in the case prominently brought out in the trial, was the contention on the part of the plaintiffs that even if Paul and his associates should be declared the regularly elected officers of the corporation, nevertheless, they would be required, as such officials, to carry out any and all outstanding ammunition contracts; that any stockholder could cause the concern to fulfill its contracts in order to save probable damages for any breach of its agreements.

To the latter contention Paul said:

"We cannot concede that Verne Woodruff's ammunition contracts are really an issue in this case, but as the other side has raised the question, we shall answer it. I will say, therefore, at this time and on behalf of those who hold a majority of the shares of stock, that if you find a verdict in our favor, gentlemen, and we control the institution, not one of such ammunition contracts will ever be fulfilled. We do not believe that the law will compel us to do so, or to mulct us in damages, if we fail to perform their murderous terms.

"But rather than turn out another shell to take human life, we would gladly submit to damages even to the value of the whole plant itself, if by so refusing to produce these hellish devices, we may be instrumental in saving the life of but one human being. These munition contracts are so highly immoral, and so contrary to our own laws, at least in times of peace, that it would stultify the conscience of any court to compel its enforcement. In times of peace, the assistance, in any manner, in the taking of human life, except in self defense, is a grave transgression of the law.

"Woodruff, like many others, has been tempted, and he fell. The gentleman who sits beside him so interested, apparently, in this case, and who is the other party to the ammunition contracts, has virtually said to Woodruff:

"'You hold in the palm of your hand the lives of several hundred—perhaps thousands of Germans and Austrians. What will you take for them, to return them to their Maker?'

"And the answer is 'Gold! More Gold!'

"The bargain has been struck. Will you gentlemen lend him encouragement? Will you render valuable assistance, so that they may carry out their plan? Or will you take from his hands these frail human lives, and thus save them to their families and friends, to their country and the world.

"It may be, as the opposing counsel states, that my view is turned heaven-ward, and that I am gazing at the stars. Would that the plaintiffs would go forth and do likewise, if only for a brief time. For if they looked into the heavens, with its myriads of shining satellites, they could realize that a Supreme Power had placed us here to work out our destiny, not to be shot out of existence—that, after all, men are brethren, and, 'Am I not my brother's keeper?'

"It is contended by the worthy gentleman on the other side that my motives, underlying this whole matter, are untenable and unjustified. It is asserted that I desire to assist the one side of the great European conflict, to the exclusion of the other. This is erroneous. I desire to assist neither, in the way of destruction. My attitude is that of a neutral in fact, berefit of any shadowy pretensions. Why should I do otherwise? My father was born upon the vine-clad slopes of the German Rhine—my mother's birthplace was sunny France.

"In this great conflict, I find my mother's people arrayed against my father's. On either side they are all good citizens, patriotic and loyal, and they love their country and are willing to lay down their lives on its behalf. But do my mother's people deserve to be slaughtered? Do my father's people merit extermination? No! But between them, and others included, there are differences to be settled. They believe that the only effective means at their command for such purposes is force, and force they employ. In the weakness of human nature, and in the absence of a proper science of government, we have allowed the animal spirit to prevail, the instincts of the lion and the tiger, the characteristics of the primitive man.

"But regardless of the awful destruction already wrought, their differences must be finally settled by arbitration; and we, as neutrals, shall be held accountable to them and to the world. For a few paltry dollars shall we continue to add fuel to the flame, and prolong the coming of that day?

"Oh! where is our true Americanism? Where is our manhood and womanhood, when we thus connive and lend ourselves as accessories to this awful crime? With our consciences deadened to the sacredness of human life, with our ears closed to the lamentations of parents and brothers and sisters and sweethearts, shall we shut out the anguish and pitiful cries of the widows and orphans? Men and women of America, where are you, that you allow such hellish practices to be persisted in, to stultify the good name and high purposes of this, our fair land!"

"My noble father, a hyphenated American, if you please, whose citizenship and loyalty to the country of his adoption were never questioned, came to the rescue of this institution at a time when it would have gone in ruin without his assistance. In the old Fatherland, he left his kin, whom he loved as you love your own. But he did not know that he thus fostered and protected a vampire that would eventually feed upon the vitals of those so near and dear, that the institution he saved, the efforts he put forth would, at last, be turned destructively against them! And all in the name of neutrality!

"But I know my father's kinsmen well; and for more than three years I was intimately associated with them, during the time I attended a great German university. I was well aware of their underlying motives and high ideals, their breadth of mind and sincerity and depth of feeling. From one of these kinsmen, my cousin, a distinguished professor in his university, I have drawn much inspiration. He was as opposed to settling disputes by force as are you and I. He loved his fellow-men with a deep passion; his profound mind was tempered and strengthened by his great heart; but his country called, he was brave and patriotic. On the firing line an

American shell sought him out, and stilled his great heart.

"Only this morning I received a letter from a cousin of mine, a sister of this professor. With the permission of the counsel on the other side, I will read it in part—perhaps it may illustrate my motives in this case."

At Paul's request to read the letter, the two distinguished attorneys had a brief whispered conversation.

"Let him read it," said one. "It won't help him any. He has already demonstrated his pro-German sympathies, and there isn't a hyphenate on that jury. He'll hang himself, so to speak, if we just give him the opportunity. When he gets through it will be plain that he is working for the interests of Germany, not for the interests of his own country or of the stockholders."

To these whispered remarks, the other nodded, smiled, and then said aloud;

"We will not object. We wish to be fair in this matter, and do not desire to take any undue advantage."

Furthermore, there was every reason why they should be lenient, as the gentleman from New York in his address had indulged himself to his heart's content, bringing in matters that were wholly extraneous to the case.

The letter was written in English, for his cousin Bertha wrote and spoke the language almost as well as Paul did himself.

As he began to read, the jurymen sat erect, the audience listened intently.

> "'But, Paul, your cousins, my brothers, are no more. The body of Carl, the professor, was the only one recovered, and I sometimes wish it had not been found, for I now entertain toward your country a grievance that I cannot express in words. At times my heart is very bitter. But I try to control my emotions and think of it all in the best possible light. I try to convince myself that you American people, as a whole, do not realize what you are doing in this war; for what have we done that we deserve your apparent wrath? Why do you turn against us your great resources of arms and ammunition, and that, too, in the face of a declared neutrality—against a people with whom you have no differences, except such as have sprung out of this ammunition traffic itself, but who have always, heretofore, been on the most friendly terms with you?
>
> "'We have heard of your country's great stand for the rights of humanity—your state papers breathe it—we have heretofore looked upon your country as a foremost champion of the rights of humanity and of humanitarian practice. But do we not belong to that great class called humanity? How can your country stand for humanity consistently now, when it allows its own citizens to assist in the extermination, without restraint, of thousands and tens of thousands of human lives?
>
> "'Your cousin, the beloved professor, was killed by a shell of American design. A fragment struck him in the thigh, and the medical men who removed it from his dead body stated that the wound itself would

have been trivial, but that the shell was impregnated with a deadly poison, and that without immediate medical assistance, nothing could have saved him—that from the nature of the poison, his death must have been slow and agonizing.

"'Can you blame me for being bitter, even now? We may excuse a worthy foe for what he may do, because he is fighting, no doubt, for what he believes is right, but we cannot hold blameless those who profess neutrality, and yet just for gold, bring upon us such calamities. I am sending you, Paul, this bit of shell that looks so innocent, yet proved so destructive. I wish you would search out the concern that made it, and present it to the head of that institution with my compliments—a keepsake to remind him in his leisure hours, of the beautiful and useful life that he thus assisted in taking—which was, no doubt, but one life among many that he has so helped to destroy. Tell him of the aged parents' grief—of the inconsolable widow—of the three fatherless children; yes, tell him all.'"

Paul could read no further. And in the awed stillness of the court-room, he laid the sheets of thin paper before him. Then he spoke again:

"And now, in conformity with the request of my cousin, I hand to the responsible party, this fragment of shell. Mr. Woodruff, will you examine this bit of metal? It evidently is of your manufacture for here, in unmistakable characters are the words 'The Central Plow Works Company!'"

There was no mistake. The characters, small as they were, were distinctly stamped in the metal itself. Woodruff had an eye to business! He wanted to advertise his wares. On every shell he had plainly impressed the name of his firm.

As Paul read the words, "The Central Plow Works Company" he stepped quickly to Woodruff's side and handed him the fragment of shell. Instead of taking it Woodruff shrank back in his chair, and put his trembling hands before his face as if to ward off a deadly thrust. His face had grown a pallid gray and over his countenance came an expression of fixed horror. Paul stretched forth the fragment towards him for a moment. Then in the tense stillness of the room, he placed it on the table before him. At once Barney Flynn picked it up. The deputy sheriff darted across the room to where Woodruff had slunk in his chair, seized the manager's right hand and pressed the fragments into it as he exclaimed:

"It's yours, Woodruff. The young leddy wanted ye to hev it."

The attorneys for the prosecution sprang to their feet, loud in their objections. Had they known just what the origin of the fragment was, referred to in the letter, they would never have allowed the letter to be read to the jury; but they believed by giving him latitude, Paul would prove things to his own undoing. When they would have objected they did not dare to do so. The letter once partially read, the jury would want to hear the whole of it, and for fear of prejudicing their cause in the eyes of that body, they listened to its entire contents.

But the best of men sometimes make mistakes, and brilliant attorneys are no exception to the rule. Even had they read the letter beforehand, they could not have foreseen the climax as it thus took place.

Paul never really finished his argument to the jury, for in the discussions that followed, the plaintiff's motion to the court that the entire episode be expunged from the record, he seemed to be unable to find another starting point, so he calmly took his chair.

When the junior counsel for the plaintiffs had at last finished, and the court had given its instructions, the twelve men retired for deliberation. They had been in their jury-room for nearly an hour, when the bailiff in charge informed the court that the jury was ready to render its verdict. At the court's direction, they were conducted into the court-room, and took their places in the box.

"You have arrived at a verdict, gentlemen?" the court inquired.

"We have," replied the foreman who handed the verdict to the clerk. It was a critical moment and Paul's nerves were strung to a high tension.

In a few moments, he would know whether his efforts were in vain—his high hopes blasted.

As the clerk began to read, everyone in the large audience was breathless, not a sound was audible except the clear tones of the reader. The judge himself leaned forward and listened anxiously, as the clerk concluded:

> "'We, the jury in the above entitled cause, find for the defendants, dismissing the action.
>
> HARRY WILKINS, Foreman.'"

And then there was pandemonium. The audience had given the benefit of the doubt to the side of the plaintiffs, urged by the fact that that side was so ably represented by eminent attorneys; and now when the verdict was disclosed in the favor of the defendants they could contain themselves no longer, and cheered lustily.

As the jurymen filed out of the jury-box, Paul gripped the hand of each and thanked them for the verdict. He himself was the recipient of many congratulations.

The deputy sheriff was so pleased with the final result that he could scarcely contain himself, and was busily engaged in shaking the hand of everyone that came within reaching distance. One who might have casually stepped into the court-room would have undoubtedly concluded that the enthusiastic gentleman, towering some six feet, was either the winning party, or attorney for the winning party.

Immediately after the verdict was read, the ammunition agent hurried away. He did not even stay to accompany Lady Price and Edith to the hotel. Woodruff was crestfallen, but angry. He had no further plan of action, and he felt he was decisively beaten.

As Paul was about to pass out of the courtroom, he came face to face with Woodruff.

" A very clever argument, Paul—I must congratulate you," said Woodruff as he stretched forth his hand, and attempted to smile, but anger was still apparent on his countenance.

Paul looked at the proffered hand, then into the speaker's face, and shook his head.

" It is stained with the blood of my kinsman—I refuse to shake hands with you! " he exclaimed as he turned away, indignantly.

CHAPTER XXIII

FOUND AT THE FOOT-BRIDGE

PAUL had not seen Edith for several days, not since he had glimpsed her in the courtroom, the last day of the trial. That day had coincided with the final day of his incarceration, and at his release, he had gone to his farm to rest his nerves and recuperate. He feared that Edith might have already gone, for he knew that Sir William had departed on the first train after the jury had brought in the verdict, and it was more than likely that Edith and her Aunt would follow at an early date.

Accordingly, as soon as Paul returned to the city, he went directly to the Tremont, and called at the Price apartments. He was met at the door by Lady Price, or Aunt Flora, as he knew her, and much to his surprise, she greeted him in a friendly manner—even cordially. Edith was home and he spent a delightful hour chatting with them both.

"Do you know, I admired your pluck in the court the other day;" said Lady Price to Paul.

"You appeared so confident, when you began your argument, and yet I knew you were trembling in your boots, so to speak. It portrayed depth of character, too—your address—and only confirmed my judgment made in England. Really I was almst convinced myself, when you had finished, that my husband and Woodruff were wrong, and that you were right."

As Paul was about to leave he asked. "Do you leave soon?"

"Yes," replied Lady Price, "we are almost ready now. We go to Chicago on the afternoon train to-morrow."

"Won't you defer your journey for at least another day?" asked Paul. "I want you and Miss Edith to be my guests at my farm to-morrow. I will take you out in my car. I have wanted to show you both, in some way, my appreciation of the treatment you gave me in England when I was imprisoned. I shall be greatly disappointed if you do not accept."

Lady Price thanked him for the invitation, but was firm in her decision that their departure could not be delayed. Edith, however, came to Paul's rescue enthusiastically, and finally her Aunt yielded. The trip East was put off for another day.

The following day, in the afternoon, Paul

"LOOK, PAUL," SHE SAID. "IT IS A GOOD OMEN."

called at the Tremont for his guests, and was disappointed to find that Lady Price was ill with a headache.

"But you can go, Edith," she said. "What I need is rest and quiet, and I'll fare better in both respects if you are absent."

Knowing that her Aunt would really be better off if left alone to rest quietly, Edith, after assuring herself that all arrangements for the elderly lady's comfort were made, started off with Paul and soon they were rapidly spinning out along the broad state road to the farm.

If you understand men, you will not be surprised to know that while Paul's invitation to Lady Price and Edith, was really meant for their entertainment, nevertheless it was not quite so innocent as it appeared on the face of it. For, back of it all, he had a plan. He sought another opportunity to plead his cause with Edith. Perhaps he was wrong in believing that she really cared for him, but he would find it out—hard as it might be—if only to discover that his hopes were built upon a false premise.

They arrived at the farm in due course, and enjoyed a pleasant hour with old Silas, the foreman, and his good helpmate, Aunt Sarah. As Paul and his foreman were talking together, a little distance from the others, he said to Paul in a low tone.

"Be you interested in her? She's a purty one!"

"No; just a friend of mine," replied Paul, blushing.

But old Silas didn't put full credence in the answer, for he looked at the young man, then laughed, still eyeing him curiously.

Finally Paul suggested a stroll over the farm on a tour of inspection. Edith promptly agreed because, she said, she wanted to see what a big American farm really looked like.

They tramped over the fields, and through the meadows, dotted with golden-rod and other late flowers. They went into the woods, and Edith was delighted with it—the squirrels gathering the harvest of acorns and nuts, and carrying them to their castles in the hollow trees. She exclaimed with delight over a flock of quail that ran before them, keeping at a respectful distance. Then she teased a snapping-turtle that they caught on the bank of the creek, apparently taking a nap. Paul was greatly surprised at Edith's endurance, for they had traveled several miles in their walk, and she was still fresh and happy, accompanying him blithely, and climbing the hills with agility.

On their way back they passed near the foot-bridge, by the maples—the little structure that held pleasant scenes for Paul, in other days.

"What a pretty little bridge!" said Edith enthusiastically. "Let us go over to it. It is so romantic!"

He walked with her to the bridge and as they strolled across she paused to look at the brook, whose murmuring and gurgling, of yore, had been an undertone in Paul's youthful lovemaking.

"Are any of these things landmarks to you?" she inquired.

"Yes," he replied, "they give setting to many, many memory pictures. See that little drab building over there? It is the schoolhouse where I learned my A. B. Cs. I do not like its color, now, it used to be yellow trimmed with white when I was a boy and lagged my way to it."

"You told me about your boyhood romance, in part, once, in England. Did it begin in that little school?" she asked.

"Yes!" replied Paul. "And it ended right here."

"On this spot?" she inquired in surprise.

"Yes, right at this bridge; I never saw her again."

"How tragic!"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Was it your fault? Did you disappoint her love?"

"I did not intend to."

"And did they recover her body?"

"Miss Price, you are talking in riddles! I do not understand you."

"Perhaps I do not understand," she replied. "But you said it ended right here, on this spot. I supposed that she was disappointed in love, threw herself over the railing, and drowned."

Paul laughed heartily.

"See! Now you are making a jest of my childish romance," he exclaimed. "It isn't deep enough, there, to drown even a cat! She might have hurt herself on the rocks, though. But she didn't try to do that at all, she just walked away."

"And hurt you, instead."

"Yes, I felt very badly for a long time at being parted from her so ruthlessly. I was sent away to the city, to attend school. I have not seen her since, and I do not know where she is. But let us forget the past. We must live for the present, and the future."

"You still think of her kindly, though, don't you," she asked roguishly.

"Indeed I do. Whenever I visit this bridge, I think of her. But only as a child. She does not seem companionable to me, now. I would like to know though what the fates have decreed for her! She was a dear little girl, and I hope she's happy!

"Edith," he continued, as he took her hand,

and looked into her eyes. "At this bridge I lost the little girl of my boyhood fancy. May I find, now, my life's companion? As a boy, I loved the little lass. But then I was a child, now I am a man with a man's purpose and a man's will. As a man, I know that there is but one for whom I care—and you have known it also for a considerable time! Tell me now, dearest, that my hopes are not in vain?"

She withdrew her hand from his. "I cannot listen to you—not yet."

He pleaded, "I know your grief. Don't think me forward, under the circumstances. I must know my fate. You are going away, to-morrow, and I may never see you again." He paused and gazed into the little brook. "You do not realize what it means to me. Your refusal would render me purposeless. Without you, I shall leave tomorrow, too—a wanderer on the face of the earth."

"But I wish you wouldn't go—and I know that without your help I shall fail in my arithmetic," she replied, in a sudden sharp voice.

Paul started as though lashed with a whip. He whirled about, his eyes wide with amazement, his mouth open. He gazed into her face as though searching a crystal. Could it be? Had he been blind?

Her auto-bonnet was thrown back, revealing clear cut features and long, wavy, dark locks hanging down loosely; she was standing there smiling—with the beautifully tinted maple leaves softly falling about her!

Gradually the features reshaped themselves and then he knew! Matured, made somewhat grave by life experiences, it was and was not the same. Something broke in his heart. He felt inundated with a wave of feeling, and he stretched out his arms for her.

"Edith! Gladys! My little lass! My love!—This is not Edith! You are—Gladys—my Gladys!" he murmured as he folded her in his arms.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN INDUSTRY OF PEACE, AGAIN

IT was dusk and the lovers were strolling along the path by the meadow, hand in hand. Edith was chiding him gently for having so long failed to recognize her.

"But why did you not discover me before?" she repeated.

"How could I?" said Paul. "You were just a child when I knew you. You have changed much, since. Your hair is darker, and as a woman you are even prettier. Besides, you were a boy's romance, a memory—I had ceased to look for you. Had you told me your name was Gladys, instead of Edith, perhaps I might have known."

"My name is, truly, Edith—Gladys Edith."

"But it is not Price?"

"That was my mother's maiden name. After she and father died, we went to England—my two brothers and myself—to visit our relatives. Uncle William and Aunt Flora had no children of their own, and so wanted us to live with them. They became greatly attached to us, as we did to them. They wanted us to be known by our mother's name—Price—and we did it to please them. I was known, always, in England, as 'Edith Price.' "

"Does Aunt Flora know of our youthful friendship?"

"No, I have never told her."

"But if you were aware of my identity, in England, why didn't you tell me, then, who you were?"

"Yes, I knew you from the first! But I was bound. I thought it best, under the circumstances, that you should not know me."

They reached the farm and after one look at them old Silas' mouth stretched from ear to ear, and so he grinned until they had disappeared in a cloud of dust down the road to Indianapolis. As they drove through the square and up to the hotel, Paul pointed to one of the windows of the Price suite where Lady Price could be seen reading.

"Come Edith," he said, "Aunt Flora must have recovered. Let us tell her at once!"

"Yes," she replied, "we will tell! Do you know, Paul," she added shyly, "I shouldn't wonder if we failed to surprise her very much!" And much to the astonishment of the passersby, Paul seized her in his arms, then and there, and kissed her.

It was a gala-day at the plant of The Central Plow Works Company. The factory itself was charmingly decorated and festooned with bunting and American flags; and every employee was on hand, for promptly at two o'clock the concern was to resume its work.

"Do the people who work here always perform their labors, attired in white shirts and standing collars," asked a passing stranger of one of the employees.

"No," he answered, "but this marks a period when we begin manufacturing plows again. They won't do much work to-day, though! Haven't you heard?"

"I have not," said the stranger.

"Well, you see, the President of the concern was married at high noon, to the loveliest little woman I ever saw. We are waiting for them. She will press the button that will set the wheels in motion. There they come, now!" and he hastily disappeared to announce their arrival.

As Paul and Edith alighted from the car, the employees of The Central Plow Works Company cheered loudly. Then they all proceeded to the President's room, which was decorated for the occasion. On the President's desk was a miniature dove, wrought in silver, mounted on a miniature plow-share, made of the same metal.

And there in the presence of the officers and employees of The Central Plow Works Company, the President's bride touched the dove's beak gently. It spread its wings, and immediately the great engines began to throb, and the machinery to whirl and sing once more in an industry of peace.

At last the pair withdrew from the throng, stepped through an open door and out upon a little porch overlooking the golden prairie. There they stood, his arm about her waist.

A few feet to the right, the factory chimney towering to a great height, was sending forth volumes of dense smoke, which rose from its summit in almost a perpendicular line.

"Look! Paul," she said. "It is a good omen! It ascends direct, like an Ancient Sacrifice, favored of Heaven—a sweet incense."

THE END.

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